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S. DOUGLAS OLSON

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STORIES AND STORYTELLING IN HOMER'S *ODYSSEY*

BY

S. DOUGLAS OLSON

E.J. BRILL
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For
Richard Janko
David Sansone
Ronald F. Thiemann

"Would that I were not among this fifth race of men,
But had died before or been born later.
For now this is a race of iron."
Hes. *Op.* 174–6

"Men wash their hands in blood as best they can."
Randall Jarrell, "Eighth Air Force"

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PREFACE

This book is intended for two, in some ways very different audiences. The first audience is an impatient one, and is interested in specific answers to specific, usually quite traditional literary and historical questions: what is the significance of κλέος in Homeric society (Ch. 1)? what is the chronological structure of the *Odyssey* (Ch. 5)? how did the Greek family really function (Ch. 8)? what is the nature of Homeric kingship (Ch. 9)? Readers of this sort will find here a series of essentially independent essays, and I ask of them only that they attempt to approach my arguments with an open mind, since much of what I have to say consists in part or whole of heterodoxy.

The second audience is a more deliberate and contemplative one, and it is that audience alone, I suspect, which will detect my larger themes. My most basic concern in this book is to explore the connection between storytelling and what I take to be the fundamental human condition. We live in the present—what Hesiod called the Age of Iron—and the problem with the present is that it is almost inevitably incoherent and unsatisfying. The world is not as we believe it should be, we ourselves are rather disappointing creatures, and the firm guiding hand of God (or the gods) is conspicuously absent from our affairs. Storytelling, I will argue, is both a response to that dilemma and an attempt to overcome it by imagining how things once were and thus by implication how they might someday be again. I begin with a general discussion of the role of rumor, reputation and storytelling (κλέος) in the world depicted in the *Odyssey* (Ch. 1), and go on to offer two specific studies of how Homer's characters tell tales and of how the poet adapts those tales to his larger purposes and concerns (Ch. 2–3). In Chapters 4–6, I shift my focus to Homer's own narrative technique and to the dilemma routinely confronted by his Achaians, which is a state of exile from an allegedly ideal and utterly lost past which simultaneously represents a perfect and seemingly unattainable future. Chapter 7 serves as a bridge between this section of the book and its conclusion by exploring how the singer handles his story of Odysseus' return to Ithaca, with particular attention to Penelope, who is trapped between past and future in much the same way as Telemachos (Ch. 4) and Eumaios

(Ch. 6). Chapters 8–10, finally, take up Odysseus' return to his native island as father, king and god. In each case, I attempt to show that the hero's appearance represents a restoration of a lost and allegedly ideal order, a longing for which is the basic concern of Homeric κλέος in all its aspects. Indeed, I ultimately suggest that Odysseus' return to Ithaca is to be understood as a phenomenon in some ways quite similar to the singing of the *Odyssey* itself, in that both events lend temporary coherence to a world which does not otherwise make sense. That idea, in some ways quite straightforward, but in others rather complicated, is what binds this book together. I ask my readers for the patience and imagination to bear with me as I explore it here.

Thanks are due Michael Browne, Lillian Doherty, Molly Levine and Victoria Pedrick, who read and commented on individual chapters of this book. David Sansone and several anonymous readers read a complete draft and saved me from numerous errors and omissions. Mary Ellen Fryer was of tremendous assistance in formatting the manuscript. Final copy was prepared at the Center for Hellenic Studies, where I held a Junior Fellowship during the 1994–95 academic year. Matthew R. Christ has been the best friend imaginable and a source of constant support and advice. The kindness of Richard Janko has also been unfailing and perhaps even less deserved. My most heartfelt thanks, however, are due my wife Andrea and our children Nat and Bekkah, whom I too (cf. 1.57–9) regret having left so much alone over the last few years.

CHAPTER ONE

ΚΛΕΟΣ IN THE HOMERIC WORLD

When Telemachos addresses the Ithacan Assembly in Book ii of Homer's *Odyssey*, he does not begin as expected (cf. i.272–4, 372–5) by directing himself to the Suitors and forbidding them his house. Instead, he appeals to the other men in the marketplace, describing the misbehavior of their sons and neighbors and his inability to deal with it (ii.50–64) and asking for their assistance on the basis of individual outrage, concern for the opinion of those dwelling in the lands around them and fear of the gods (ii.64–7). Telemachos' fundamental problem is that Odysseus has disappeared without a word or a trace (i.241–2; cf. i.235–6), despite the contradictory and confused rumors, prophecies and lies which continue to circulate regarding him (e.g. i.166–8, 194–205, 408–16; ii.170–6), but in addition the disguised Athena has reminded him of the brilliant reputation (κλέος) won by Orestes and has suggested that he try to make a similar name for himself (i.298–302). The boy's most basic intention when he addresses the Assembly is thus to go abroad in search of news of his father (ii.214–7) and perhaps in the end to make his own mark on the world. At the same time, however, he is attempting to rally public opinion to his side, and Antinoos in his response accordingly characterizes Telemachos' initial speech as an effort to shame his enemies and blacken their reputation (ii.85–6). For his part, Antinoos insists that the blame for what is going on belongs elsewhere (esp. ii.87–8): Penelope may be winning a great name (κλέος) for herself by her endless clever delays, but she is ruining her house in the process and would be well-advised to take a new husband sooner rather than later (ii.125–8). Telemachos too is aware of the price of his mother's continued intransigence (cf. i.245–51). All the same, he says he will not drive her out of the house against her will, not only because he fears the anger of her father and her own departing curse (ii.134–6), but because he assumes other people would react badly to such behavior (ii.136–7). Penelope herself, meanwhile, is also paralyzed at least in part because she fears what the Ithacans will say of her if she marries again while Odysseus' status is in doubt (xvi.73–5; xix.524–7; cf. xxiii.148–51), although she previously used the same

phenomenon to her own advantage, justifying her weaving-trick by arguing that the local women would be outraged were Laertes buried without a shroud (ii.101–2 = xix.146–7 = xxiv.136–7).[1]

In one obvious surface sense, the social world depicted in the *Odyssey* is profoundly fragmented. The Achaians live in private, walled houses in small, scattered communities and have no common government or formal law and legislation. There are no regular or organized communications among them, no mass media to spread information, and no national institutions to bring them together in one place. Even the great common enterprise of the Trojan War is now a part of the past, the details of it preserved (or invented) only through occasional personal reminiscence and the continuing work of singers (e.g. iii.103–98; iv.238–89; viii.73–82, 499–520). Despite all that, the Achaians are unmistakeably a single community and, as the debate in Book ii makes clear, what binds them together is an elaborate network of gossip, rumor and reputation. Homer's characters talk about themselves and others constantly and aggressively, and the stories generated in this manner pass on with extraordinary speed from one place and individual to the next. My primary purpose in this initial chapter is to trace the precise social mechanics of that process, which is to say of κλέος, within the *Odyssey*, to ask how it culminates in song and to draw attention to the peculiar relation such talk bears to the world in which it is generated and which it then goes on to shape. So too in this book as a whole, I am interested in the first instance in the generally very parochial and pointed ways in which Homer's characters tell stories and in how the poet adapts the accumulating force of those subsidiary narratives to his own concerns. My larger goal, however, is to ask how the *Odyssey* confronts the world in which it originated and where it continues to be read or, more finely put, to ask what κλέος has to do with real life. I begin with a relatively straightforward philological point.

Although a great deal has been written in recent years about κλέος as specifically 'poetic glory,' the essential meaning of the word within the Homeric poems is simply 'oral report' about an event (xxiii.137–8; XI.21–2, 227–8; XIII.364), object (VIII.192–3) or individual (iii.83; xiii.415), and thus 'gossip' or 'news' (esp. xvi.461; cf. i.282–3; ii.216–7).[2] When Telemachos goes in search of Odysseus' ἀκουή (iv.701;

[1] For Penelope's fear of public opinion, cf. Morgan (1991).

[2] Cf. *LfgrE* 1438–40 s.v. κλέος; Redfield (1975) 31–5. That κλέος was the poet's

xvii.43), κληηδών (iv.317) and κλέος (iii.83; xiii.415), after all, he is after one thing only: information about his father's death or current whereabouts. To be snatched away ἀκλειῶς ('without κλέος') is thus to disappear utterly from common knowledge and report (i.235–42).[3] To have great κλέος, on the other hand, is to be spoken of widely and in a favorable fashion, regardless of one's immediate circumstances (iv.724–6; cf. xvii.73–7; xxiv.727–8; VII.86–91). κλέος at its most basic is accordingly the reputation an Achaian enjoys among his or her contemporaries, or 'what is said' of that individual and his or her deeds both in the present and (potentially) the future (e.g. i.298–300; iii.203–4). The Stranger therefore tells Amphinomos that he has heard over and over again the κλέος ἐσθλόν ('excellent reputation') of his father, which is that he is noble and rich (xviii.126–7), while Telemachos declares he has always heard Odysseus' 'great κλέος,' that he is a fighter and a schemer (xvi.241–2; cf. xxiii.124–6). So too Odysseus' assertion that Alkinoos' κλέος will be 'unquenchable' if he keeps his promise to send him home (vii.331–3) means nothing more than his subsequent vow to advertise Phemios' ability as a bard 'to all men' if he tells the story of the Wooden Horse correctly (viii.496–8): in each case, the hero's point is simply that he will pass on a favorable report of what he has observed to others and that the story will move out into the world at large from there.[4] The fundamental importance of gossip or rumor of this sort in binding the Achaian community together is signalled explicitly at several points in the *Odyssey*, where it is referred to as ὄσσα . . . / ἐκ Διός ('rumor from Zeus') 'which especially brings news (κλέος) to men' (i.282–3; ii.216–7).[5] Indeed, although in Book xxiii Odysseus manages to keep word (κλέος) of the fact that the Suitors have been killed from spreading through

own term for the glory conferred through singing has been argued in particular by Nagy (1974) 229–61, summarized in Nagy (1979) 16, 95. *Pace* Nagy (1979) 95, however, Nagy (1974) 246–8, did not undertake a systematic study of the word in either epic, but instead examined the verb κλέω/κλείω. That word, along with the plural of κλέος, κλέα, might indeed be part of the technical vocabulary of Homeric singing, although note IX.524; xiii.298–9; xvii.418. The singular κλέος, on the other hand, never obviously and unambiguously means specifically 'poetic glory' in either the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad*. See also Appendix A.

[3] Note also iv.727–8, where Penelope's insistence that Telemachos has vanished ἀκλέα ('without κλέος') means not that he has lost his poetic glory or his great personal reputation, neither of which he ever enjoyed, but simply that she did not hear of his departure.

[4] For κλέος with this same basic sense of 'praise conferred by numerous speakers,' cf. i.451–2; viii.74.

[5] For gossip and rumor in a later period, see Hunter (1990), = (1994) 96–119.

the city immediately (xxiii.131–9, esp. 137–8), the next morning Ὄσσα herself travels about as a messenger announcing what has happened (xxiv.413–4), much as in the *Iliad* she urges Agamemnon's troops to Assembly and even seems to accompany them there (II.93–4). This same phenomenon can be termed φάτις ('talk') (xxiii.362–3) and, on this less symbolic level, has a number of specific roots in Achaian society.

For good or for bad, first of all, what goes on within an Achaian house is not automatically or even easily kept private. Even in so large a palace as Odysseus' (cf. xvii.266–8), sound travels everywhere. From the women's quarters, for example, Penelope can make out what Phemios is singing in the central hall below (i.328–9), hear a blow being struck there and identify both the aggressor and the victim (xvii.492–3, 501–4; cf. xxi.235–9, 382–5; xxiii.40–2), and catch the sound of a sneeze and know who has produced it (xvii.541–5). If she wishes to follow the conversation among the men more closely, she places herself just opposite the door to listen (xx.387–9). The walls thus all potentially have ears, and if one has a secret, one is wise not to speak it out too loud or indiscreetly (esp. i.132–5, 156–65; iv.768–75; xix.479–86). In addition, at least some of what goes on within a house can be heard or otherwise detected from the street by neighbors or random passers-by. Thus the Suitors' plot against Telemachos comes to Penelope's attention when Medon, standing just outside the courtyard, overhears them making plans within and passes word of their intentions on to his mistress (iv.677–8; cf. xxi.228–9). So too Penelope says that in her dream of the geese and the eagle the local women gathered to her when they heard her cries of distress, although she was inside the courtyard of her house at the time (xix.541–3), while the Stranger detects music and the scent of roasting meat coming from the palace when he first arrives in front of it, and concludes on that basis that a feast is going on within (xvii.260–2, 269–71; cf. x.220–8). After the battle with the Suitors is over, therefore, Odysseus calls for song and dance specifically in the expectation that passers-by and neighbors will hear the noise and conclude that a marriage-celebration is in progress (xxiii.133–6), and in the event this is precisely what happens, with the happy result that the hero's return and its bloody consequences remain a secret overnight (xxiii.148–52).[6]

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[6] Note also how before the attack Odysseus orders that the courtyard gates be

Keeping personal secrets is made even more difficult for the Achaians by the fact that slaves are a constant presence in normal Homeric households and regularly carry confidential messages between their free members (xvi.130–1, 151–3; cf. iv.735–8; xxiv.403–5). In addition, free women in particular seem quite willing to discuss their personal affairs with their servants, to the extent that Eumaios says that talking in the mistress' company and asking her every sort of question is a basic servile pleasure (xv.376–7; cf. xv.361–2). Thus Penelope is seen at one point speaking with her women about the bad behavior of the Suitors and the hatred they inspire in her (xvii.492–506; cf. xviii.158–68; xix.93–5) and at another telling them of her grief for Telemachos (iv.716–28), while Nausikaa describes her stunned admiration for the Stranger to the maids who have accompanied her to the river (vi.238–45).[7] As a result of all this, slaves have access to a great deal of potentially sensitive information, and it is accordingly no accident that Athena advises Odysseus to go directly to Eumaios when he first reaches Ithaca and to ask him 'everything' (xiii.411), or that Telemachos stops at the hut to find out how Penelope has behaved while he was absent in Pylos and Sparta (xvi.31–5).[8] Indeed, Eumaios seems to know virtually everything about his household's internal affairs, from how many animals the vanished Odysseus has (xiv.100–4) to Telemachos' destination on his journey abroad (xiv.179–80) to the cause of Antikleia's death (xv.358–9) to the exact circumstances in which Laertes lives (xv.353–7; xvi.138–43) and how Penelope passes her nights (xvi.37–9). One obvious implication of the openness servants are shown is that they are almost automatically assumed (by their mistresses, at least) to be loyal and to know how to keep a secret. Eurykleia does conceal Telemachos' absence from his mother just as he orders (ii.373–7), after all, although she quickly confesses what she has done when the news leaks out in another way (iv.675–749), and Penelope manages to keep her weaving trick undiscovered for a full three years, despite the presence of fifty bond-women in the house

secured from inside (xxi.240–1), obviously in order to prevent anyone who hears the sound of fighting going on from bursting in to help or interfere.

[7] Note also Penelope's anger when her servant-women fail to tell her of Telemachos' absence (iv.729–31); clearly they are a basic source of information for her in her general social isolation (cf. xv.515–7; xix.134). For similar issues in a later period, see Hunter (1994) 70–95.

[8] Even the secret of Odysseus' bed is shared by a serving-woman (xxiii.225–8).

(cf. xxii.421–2). Not all servants deal so responsibly with the information they are given (cf. xix.91–5), however, and many instead show a distinct tendency to talk about what they know to others. While the only explanation Eumaios offers for his knowledge of the wretched condition of Laertes is that this is 'what people say' (φασίν xvi.142–5), after all, the source of the tale can scarcely be anyone but the servants the isolated old man has with him in the country (xxiv.209–12), just as news of Penelope's miserable nights must ultimately be traced back to her maids. Indeed, it was precisely a report by one of her serving-women which brought Penelope's weaving-trick to an end (e.g. ii.107–9) and thus precipitated the crisis with which the *Odyssey* begins. So too Eumaios says expressly that when he goes into town on occasion, people sit down beside him and ask him 'everything' (τὰ ἕκαστα xiv.375–7) and, given the swineherd's apparently profound love of telling and listening to tales (e.g. xiv.45–7; xv.398–401), it is difficult to believe he does not accommodate them or pose his own questions in turn. When he returns to the hut after his mission to Penelope in Book xvi, at any rate, Telemachos immediately asks him what talk (κλέος) is going about the city concerning the Suitors (xvi.461–3), as if he can be assumed to have collected whatever gossip was current there while he was gone, and Athena puts Odysseus back in disguise at the end of Book xvi specifically out of concern that if the swineherd learns the Stranger's true identity, he will lose control of himself and run off to town with the news (xvi.454–9). Perhaps even more to the point, Eumaios goes on at length to his anonymous visitor about his master and the family's personal affairs (e.g. xiv.81–108; xv.353–70), and seems unable to keep quiet even when he knows he should (xiv.144–6). This is a very serious matter, and with the accidental exception of Eurykleia, who is immediately and brutally silenced when she learns more than she ought to (xix.479–90, 502), Odysseus accordingly keeps his slaves ignorant of his return to Ithaca until he has no choice in the matter (esp. xxi.188–221).[9]

News of an Achaian's personal affairs can thus leak out to the world at large in a variety of ways, and to these must be added the

[9] Even at the last moment, in fact, when he must identify himself to Philoitios and Eumaios or forego their help, Odysseus apparently feels some reluctance to give up his disguise (xxi.193–4). Compare Telemachos' decision to lock the servant-women up in their quarters when he removes the arms from the hall (xix.16), presumably so they will have less to tell their lovers among the Suitors when they see them later that evening (xx.6–7).

comments of guests, strangers and beggars, who are an additional regular presence in the house but have no incentive to conceal any unpleasantness they may witness there from others. Indeed, Penelope notes explicitly at one point that ξεῖνοι are the fundamental means by which an individual reputation (κλέος) is made and maintained, and she accordingly treats the Stranger with every courtesy in hopes he will speak well of her (xix.325–34, esp. 332–4).[10] When Antinoos hits the old man with a footstool during one of the Suitors' banquets, on the other hand, she tells Telemachos that if he tolerates behavior of this sort, he will do great damage to his reputation (xviii.220–5), for people can be expected to talk about how the guests in a house are treated (cf. xiv.402–5).[11] All that is ever said of King Echetos, after all, is that he shaves off the nose and ears of everyone who visits him and feeds their private parts to his dogs, but he nonetheless functions as a symbol of depraved villainy throughout the epic (xviii.84–7; cf. xxi.307–9). Nor is Telemachos himself unaware of this, as his initial reluctance to accept the Stranger as his ξεῖνος and bring him back to the palace, where he knows he will be unable to protect him, makes quite clear (xvi.69–70; cf. xv.513–5, 540–3). So too Nestor reacts with horror when Athena and Telemachos attempt to return to their ship at the end of their first day in Pylos; the obvious implication of their departure now would be that he was unable or unwilling to accommodate them, and he accordingly will not allow it (iii.342–55). To restrain a guest who is genuinely eager to leave is defined as boorish behavior by Menelaos (xv.68–74), whose judgment is supported by Alkinoos (vii.315–6).[12] By the same token, however, one must not drive away the man who wishes to stay (cf. xv.72–3), and hosts therefore routinely urge visitors to remain even after

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[10] The Stranger's remarks at xix.107–8 about how Penelope's κλέος reaches Heaven are thus very cunningly conceived. Note also Alkinoos' decision to put on displays of athletics and dancing in the hope that his guest will report the Phaeacians' abilities to his own visitors and family (viii.100–3, 241–5, 250–3), and contrast the behavior of the Kyklops, who feels no concern for what his 'guests' may think of him (esp. ix.355–70) but gets his come-uppance when Odysseus slanders him repeatedly and at length in Scheria (e.g. ix.189, 215).

[11] Cf. Menelaos' outraged horror at Eteoneus' suggestion that the anonymous guests at his door be sent on elsewhere (iv.26–36); Hes. *Op.* 715–6 (μηδὲ πολύξεινον μηδ' ἄξεινον καλέεσθαι); Edwards (1985) 74–5; Reece (1993).

[12] Cf. Athena/Mentes' prophecy that Odysseus is the captive of men who are ἄγριοι and χαλεποί and who are accordingly 'keeping him against his will' (i.197–9), as well as the behavior of the archetypically bad hosts Polyphemos (esp. ix.310–7) and Kirke (x.237–43).

they voice an initial desire to go (i.303–9; iii.342–55; xi.330–61; xv.304–42);[13] indeed, on occasion they even offer gifts as an incentive to encourage a somewhat longer stay (i.309–13; iv.587–92; xi.350–2). Hosts also give lavish presents to noble ξεῖνοι when they leave in any case (e.g. iii.490 = xv.188; iv.125–32; xv.82–5; xix.241–3; xxiv.271–9; cf. i.310–3), however, not only as a display of personal affection and respect, but also in some cases with the express wish that the gift be used in company and thus lead to the donor being mentioned favorably in the presence of others (iv.590–2; viii.430–2; cf. xv.123–6).[14] What guests do is also noted and commented upon, especially if they are upper-class (καλοί) and thus of interest in and of themselves. Thus Telemachos gets good κλέος for himself during the course of his adventures abroad (esp. xiii.422–3; cf. i.93–5) by doing nothing more than proving thoughtful and intelligent and thus the worthy son of his father (esp. iii.123–5; iv.611), while Eurymachos has no doubt that word of the Suitors' failure to string the bow will very quickly make its way about the local community, bringing disgrace upon them all (xxi.250–5, 323–9).[15] When the Stranger begs food from Antinoos, therefore, he tells him he appears to be 'the best of the Achaians' and offers to spread his fame 'throughout the boundless earth' if he is sufficiently generous (xvii.415–8). When he is abused, on the other hand, the old man calls this the act of a fool (esp. xvii.454), presumably at least in part because he and others can now be expected to talk of it.

The Achaians are thus constantly under the judgmental eyes of one another even within their own houses, and equally intense scrutiny and criticism results when an individual appears on the street or in the marketplace. Nausikaa in particular is aware that she is watched closely when she goes out, and Athena actually uses a reminder that people will notice whether her clothing and that of her attendants is clean at her wedding and will talk of it to motivate the girl to go washing in the first place (vi.27–30). That men are subject to the same sort of pressure is apparent from the fact that the princess uses

[13] It is thus an act of courtesy and an honor to the host for a ξεῖνος at least to express a desire to stay for an extended period of time in his house (iv.595–8; xi.356–8).

[14] For the connection between generous gift-giving and a king's reputation and political power, cf. Donlan (1982a).

[15] On Telemachos' κλέος, see Chapter 4. For an example of a misbehaving guest, note the tale of the 'very famous' (ἀγακλυτόν) Eurytion, who became drunk in Peirithoos' house and was brutally punished for his outrages (xxi.295–304).

similar arguments on her father a little later, implying that he and her brothers must also be concerned about what they wear in public (vi.60–5). This is all deliberate misdirection on her part (vi.66–7), of course, but what matters is that she intends her excuse to be believable: 'it is fitting' (ἔοικε) that nobles dress well when they leave the house (cf. xxii.487–9), which is to say that it will be noticed and presumably remarked upon in an unfavorable manner if they do not. When Telemachos appears in the Ithacan marketplace in Books ii and xvii, therefore, Athena is careful to pour down grace upon him (ii.12–3; xvii.63–4), just as she does with Odysseus in a similar situation on Scheria (viii.19–23). Nausikaa knows her marital status is also a subject of much potential comment and assumes that anyone among the lower classes (κακώτεροι) who sees her on the road with Odysseus will immediately begin to speculate out loud as to the stranger's identity and the nature of his relationship with her (vi.275–85).[16] As a result, she does her best to keep the connection between them secret (vi.291–9), for were she to act otherwise she would risk becoming the object of bitter talk (φῆμιν ἀδευκέα) and blame (μή τις ὀπίσσω/ μωμεύῃ), and that is a risk she will not take with her reputation.[17]

Odysseus refers to the process by which information gathered in one of these ways begins to circulate more generally about the city as φάτις ('talk'), and associates it with the first stirrings of social activity as the sun rises in the morning (xxiii.362–3).[18] Indeed, when Eurykleia sends some of the household's women off to the spring early in the day before the Suitors' final banquet, she is forced to order them not to linger there (xx.153–4) as they would otherwise apparently be tempted to do, obviously in order to talk with and see

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[16] Contrast vi.182–5, where Odysseus insists that a good marriage will also become a subject of widespread verbal report, and note Agamemnon's remarks at xxiv.192–8. For the class-basis of this anxiety, note the aristocrat (xv.518–22) Eurymachos' fear of scornful comments made by those of lower social rank (xxi.323–9; cf. XXII.106–7). Penelope accordingly insists she will incur disgrace if Laertes is buried shroudless specifically because he is rich (ii.102 = xix.147 = xxiv.137). Were he and his house less well-off, the implication seems to be, not only would their poverty exempt them from such censure, but no-one would care what they did in any case.

[17] Cf. Cairns (1990). For anonymous speeches of this sort and their function in Homeric society, cf. Hentze (1905); Wilson (1979); de Jong (1987).

[18] Indeed, the regular connection made between the Sun himself and rumor and verbal report elsewhere in the poem (viii.302; xi.109; xii.374–5) suggests a transformation of social reality into mythology.

other people.[19] Such 'talk' seems to go on everywhere within the city (ἀνὰ ἄστυ xvi.461; κατὰ ἄστυ xxiii.137; κατὰ πτόλιν ... πάντῃ xxiv.413) and is a matter of interest for both sexes (esp. φάτιν ἀνδρῶν ἠδὲ γυναικῶν xxi.323).[20] The way in which it is manufactured and spread can be traced most easily, however, among men and thus specifically in the marketplace.

Although no formal public meeting has been held on Ithaca since Odysseus went off to Troy (ii.26–7) and the Assembly called by Telemachos is quickly broken up by the Suitors (ii.252, 257–8), the ἀγορή ('place of assembly' or 'marketplace') in the city functions throughout the poem as the spot where the local men gather to talk among themselves and to be seen. When the Suitors meet there to discuss Telemachos' safe return from abroad in Book xvi, in fact, they are forced to make a special effort to keep the other men already present at a distance in order that their words not be overheard (xvi.361–2). So too when Telemachos comes to the city sometime toward mid-morning on the next day, he heads off almost at once to the ἀγορή (xvii.52), where he finds 'all the people' (πάντες λαοί), including a substantial crowd of Suitors and a separate group of elders, already assembled (xvii.64–70), and first thing the next day he goes off there again 'to join the company of the well-greaved Achaians' (xx.146).[21] On Scheria as well, when Nausikaa describes the city to Odysseus she mentions first the wall, the harbor and the boat-slips (vi.262–5), and then the ἀγορή built around a sanctuary of Poseidon (vi.266–7). This is the local commercial and industrial center of this sea-faring people, the place where cables and sails are tended to and oars manufactured (vi.268–72), and it is also here that the city's men meet, presumably at the same time that at least some of them are going about their daily business, to exchange the talk (φῆμιν) the princess fears so much (xi.273–85). It is also to the market-

[19] For the spring 'whence the citizens drew their water,' cf. xvii.204–11. The site is close to the city (xvii.205) and at a point where a number of paths from the country meet (xvii.211), so that it is a natural meeting-place (cf. xvii.212–4). The topography of Telepyle is very similar (x.103–8).

[20] The clear implication of Telemachos' remark at i.358–9 (μῦθος δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει), however, is that, in his mind at least, it is improper for a woman to break into a session of song or storytelling going on among men; note Arete's silence until all the other guests depart at vii.228–33.

[21] It is also to the marketplace that Medon and Phemios come on the morning after Odysseus' revenge (xxiv.439–40), having been told to report what they have seen to others (xxii.373–4), and to the ἀγορή as well that the Suitors propose to send Theoklymenos when they want to be rid of him (xx.361–2).

place that Alkinoos takes Odysseus early the next morning (viii.4–5) and, although Athena summons the local populace to see and hear from the stranger (viii.7–17), the king himself clearly intends to deal with the questions raised by his guest during a private feast for the city's elders in his palace (vii.189–94) and, for all that one can tell, goes off to the ἀγορή first thing in the morning simply because that is what a man in this world naturally does.[22]

Gossip and rumor thus begin on a purely local level in the *Odyssey* in the things individual Achaians see and hear and in the sometimes malicious or distorted report of those events which they pass on to one another in the marketplace or elsewhere. At least some of these stories are subsequently taken home by individual men to their wives and children, so that Penelope can ask Medon in an extremely pointed manner whether the Suitors were not told by their fathers what sort of a king Odysseus was and how he dealt with his people (iv.687–91; cf. xvi.424–30).[23] More important for our purposes, however, is that κλέος also has the power to move out from individual local communities into the Achaian world at large, as Telemachos' appeal to the assembled Ithacans to take into account the likely reaction of the other people living in the region should they fail to side with him makes clear (ii.65–6). The basic agents in this process are travellers, who routinely report on what they have seen or heard in one place to interlocutors in another, and who are often given other, sometimes local stories in return. On occasion, the news one gets from a visitor has to do with one's own family or people, in which case it is termed an ἀγγελίη.[24] Thus Eurymachos suggests Telemachos' mysterious visitor may have brought 'some ἀγγελίην of your father

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[22] Cf. x.114, where King Antiphates must also be fetched from the ἀγορή.

[23] For informal storytelling with family members present, note also Nestor's stories of Troy and the homecomings (iii.103–98, 254–328), told in the company of his sons (iii.32); Helen's presence at iv.121–305, and Arete's at viii.417–xiii.17; Menelaos' expectation that Peisistratos and Telemachos will have heard of him from their fathers (iv.94), confirmed by Peisistratos at iv.190–2; Odysseus' stories to Aiolos in the company of the king's wife and children of both sexes (x.5–16); Odysseus' report to his parents of his trip to Autolykos (xix.463–6; cf. xv.156–9); Telemachos' account to Penelope of his journey abroad (xvii.96–149; cf. xvii.44); Alkinoos' expectation that his guest will describe what he has seen on Scheria to a guest in the presence of his own wife and children (viii.241–5); and the storytelling of Odysseus and Penelope after they are reunited (xxiii.300–43).

[24] ἀγγελίαι can also be messages deliberately sent from one individual to another (ii.92), although it is often difficult to disentangle the various levels of motivation in these situations, since wanderers naturally offer the tales they think will be most appealing to their audiences (esp. xiv.115–32).

on the way' (i.408; cf. ii.30), while Laertes worries that news of the death of the Suitors may spread to the Kephallenian cities in the same manner (xxiv.353–5). Much more often, however, travellers bring rumors and stories of distant people and places, which they share with their host as a basic part of Homeric hospitality.[25]

The exchange of stories is a central feature of most scenes of hospitality in the *Odyssey* and plays a vital role in making a visit enjoyable and successful for all parties involved (esp. iv.595–8; xvii.514–21).[26] On Scheria, for example, Odysseus offers the Phaeacians an extraordinary night-long tale of his wanderings (ix.39–xii.450) and wins himself rich gifts and an even greater degree of acceptance as a result (esp. xi.330–69), just as he does again in somewhat more humble surroundings on his first evening in Eumaios' hut (esp. xiv.508–22).[27] So too in the course of his journeys, the hero reports, Aiolos actually detained him for an entire month asking 'everything' (ἕκαστα) about Troy (x.14–6), while Kirke insisted on a full report of his trip to the Underworld upon his return to Aiaia (xii.33–5).[28] In return, a host may offer stories of his or her own, as both Eumaios (esp. xv.403–84) and Penelope (xix.129–61, 512–53) do with the Stranger, and as Nestor (iii.103–98, 254–328) and Helen and Menelaos (iv.235–89, 347–586) do with Telemachos.[29] Indeed, Odysseus' fateful decision to surrender his name to Polyphemos is driven specifically by the expectation that someone else will visit the monster eventually and ask how he came to be blinded, in which case he wants to be identified as the author of the deed (ix.502–5). The best stories, in one sense, are always those for which the narrator can vouch personally

[25] For κλέος as a semi-concrete object 'carried' from one place to another, note esp. iii.203–4: καί οἱ Ἀχαιοὶ/ οἴσουσι κλέος εὐρύ ('and the Achaians will carry his κλέος wide [i.e. throughout the world]').

[26] Cf. Reece (1993) 28–9, who identifies 'Exchange of Information' and 'Entertainment' (including informal storytelling by host or guest) as Items XII and XIII in his standard scheme.

[27] Cf. the various appealing tales he tells Penelope later (xix.172–202, 225–48, 270–307).

[28] Even there, virtually all Odysseus' time was spent questioning the souls he saw, listening to their stories, and offering others in return (e.g. xi.233–4, 397–434, 505–37; cf. xxiv.36–190).

[29] In Pylos and Sparta, in fact, the hosts dominate the scene almost entirely and Telemachos offers very little information of his own, except for one quick summary of events on Ithaca for Menelaos' benefit (iv.318–21). Were the boy somewhat older and more worldly, or had he not been cut off for so many years from other travellers and their tales (i.176–7), one assumes, he might have contributed more to these conversations.

(e.g. iv.235–89; ix.39–xii.450; cf. viii.489–91), since in a world full of fast-talking charlatans and cheats (esp. xi.363–6; xiv.124–32, 378–87; xxiii.215–7) they are marginally more likely than others to be true.[30] When Athena advises Telemachos to go abroad after news of his father, therefore, she draws a clear distinction between what other people can tell him on the basis of personal observation and what he may learn from 'rumor from Zeus,' i.e. from stories whose original source can no longer be identified (i.281–3). As a direct result, when storytellers in the *Odyssey* are unable to vouch personally for the truth of a tale, they sometimes attempt to bolster the credibility of their account by noting that their own source claimed autopsy in the matter (iv.556) or swore an oath to guarantee his veracity (xiv.331–3 = xix.288–90). More often they simply pass on to their interlocutors whatever information others have offered them before, and it is vague and ultimately unattributable rumor of this sort, Athena concedes, 'which especially brings news (κλέος) to men' (i.283).[31] Although Nestor knows nothing at first hand about the various homecomings of the Achaians, for example, he offers Telemachos a mish-mash of tales gathered from previous, unidentified visitors (iii.186–7), and the boy himself engages in the early stages of the same process when he repeats Menelaos' news of Odysseus' captivity with Kalypso, now at third-hand, to Penelope back on Ithaca (xvii.138–47; cf. xvii.68–70). One significant effect of this constant outward-expanding exchange of tales is that even the smallest and most distant Achaian communities can be expected to share a basic common stock of information about one another. Thus Nestor can take it for granted that the Ithacans, isolated though they are (νόσφιν ἐόντες), know the tale of Agamemnon's death (iii.193–4), and has himself heard about the situation on Ithaca even before Telemachos' visit (iii.212–3). In a similar fashion, Odysseus assumes (perhaps a bit naively) that the Kyklops is well-acquainted

[30] For the unreliability of oral reports not received at first-hand, cf. i.194–5; xix.309–14; and contrast Odysseus' emphasis on the extraordinary accuracy of the account of events at Troy that he as an eyewitness can offer (x.16). Cf. Parry (1994) 6–8.

[31] Cf. Telemachos' observation that Odysseus disappeared both unseen (ἄιστος) and unheard-of (ἄπυστος), two separate phenomena which combine to define ἀκλειῶς (i.241–2); Odysseus' identification of the ways in which a man might ordinarily be expected to know the details of a story, 'as if you were present yourself or heard (it) from another' (viii.491); and the remarks of Ford (1992) 104–6. A clear and specific contrast between what is heard by individuals who were not present at an event (κλέος) and the knowledge of eye-witnesses (in this case the Muses) is also drawn at Il.485–6.

with the Greek expedition to Troy and in particular with Agamemnon, 'whose κλέος is now the greatest under heaven,' and seems to believe the monster will be impressed and perhaps a bit intimidated by his own connection to such an important and dangerous figure (ix.259, 263–6).[32] Likewise the disguised Athena can insist to Odysseus (perhaps with a bit of teasing exaggeration) that anyone who has not heard at least the name of Ithaca must be a fool or else from exceptionally far away, since report of the island has gone as far as Troy which itself, she adds, 'they say' is far from Achaian territory (xiii.237–49). As a result, extraordinary κλέος is frequently described as 'wide' (εὐρύ), i.e. widely dispersed (i.344; iii.203–4; iv.815–6), or said to reach to heaven, i.e. as far as it can go (ix.20; xix.107).[33] The culmination of this process of local gossip growing gradually into widespread, even universally known rumor and reputation is song.[34]

Singers are Homeric society's storytellers *par excellence* and the standard by which all other narrators are measured (xi.368–9; xvii.518–21). They are accordingly welcome everywhere (xvii.382–6) and are listened to with great attention and pleasure (esp. i.325–6, 369–71; viii.90–1, 367–9; ix.3–11). Like all other narrators within the poem, however, they do not trade openly in fantasy or free creation, but instead report on real events such as the disastrous return of the Achaians (i.326–7) or the war at Troy (viii.73–82, 499–520).[35] At the same time, it is clear from the text that they are not generally itinerant collectors of material who gather songs or ideas in one place and pass them on in another, having transformed them if necessary into verse in the meantime.[36] Thus Demodokos seems to have his

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[32] *Pace* Edwards (1985) 83 n. 28, there is nothing peculiar about this κλέος beyond the fact that Odysseus is ironically unaware of what Agamemnon is really famous for (i.35–6).

[33] For wide geographical dispersion as the definition of the greatest κλέος, cf. i.30 (τηλεκλυτός); xiii.248–9; xvii.418; and the personal name Εὐρύκλεια.

[34] For the relationship between rumor, κλέος and song in the *Odyssey*, cf. Thalmann (1984) 113–33; Ford (1992) 102–10. On the role of singers and thus the nature of poetry in Homer, cf. Minton (1960); Murray (1981); de Jong (1989) 45–53; Finkelberg (1990); Segal (1992a).

[35] Note also the essentially historical content of the song of the Sirens (xii.189–91). The love-affair of Ares and Aphrodite (viii.266–366) as well is treated as an entirely real event; cf. Penelope's observation that bards spread the κλέος of the deeds of both men and the gods (i.337–8).

[36] Cf. Ford (1992) 90–130, esp. 90–6, who points out that such isolation does not necessarily represent the experience of the historical Homer or other singers of his time.

own house on Scheria (viii.43–4, 62) and his blindness (viii.64) effectively rules out the possibility that he has wandered widely through the world and witnessed many things; Phemios tells Odysseus that if his life is spared, he will be available to sing for him in the future (xxii.345–8), implying he is himself an Ithacan; and Agamemnon knew the anonymous singer in Mycenae well enough to place him in control of his household when he left for Troy (iii.267–8; cf. ii.225–7). Instead, as their inclusion in the category δημιοεργοί at xvii.382–6 makes clear, the *Odyssey*'s singers are part of their society's permanent settled local 'professional class' and are accordingly summoned from time to time to carry out their trade in private houses (esp. viii.43–4, 471–3; cf. xxii.351–3), precisely like other highly-skilled individuals such as prophets, doctors, carpenters (xvii.383–4; cf. i.415–6; xvii.340–1 = xxi.43–4) and goldsmiths (iii.425–6, 432–5).[37] As regards the tales they tell, they are held to what appear to be extremely rigorous standards of accuracy, so that the highest possible praise for one is for an eyewitness to say he describes events precisely as they happened (viii.487–91).[38] Only under the most extraordinary circumstances could such an evaluation be made, however, and the more important point is that singers within the poem are never treated as independent sources of factual information to whom one might go for the answer to an obscure but theoretically answerable question, such as the whereabouts of one's vanished husband or father. Homer himself lays claim to the guidance of a Muse (i.1–10) and notes that Demodokos was given the gift of song by one as well (viii.63–4), and Odysseus at one point says something rather similar (viii.488;

[37] For δημιοεργοί as locally-based individuals rather than itinerants, cf. xix.135, where the reference is to heralds. Ford (1992) 96 n. 8, takes xvii.382–6 as a reference to travelling bards, but all Eumaios says there is that it is not the part of a guest to invite a 'stranger from abroad' to a third party's banquet unless that stranger is the sort of person men call to their houses anyway, such as prophets, doctors, builders and singers. Naturally a man in any of these professions can by ill luck become an exile from his land (cf. Theoklymenos at xv.223–5), and Eumaios' point is that in such a situation it is no imposition to bring him along when one visits elsewhere. There is no implication, however, that such men normally and routinely rove the world. Indeed, that Eumaios calls these people κλητοί (xvii.386) suggests the opposite, since strangers normally appear spontaneously and are thus not 'summoned,' whereas the verb καλέω (whence κλητός) is regularly used in the *Odyssey* to refer to the call one sends out to friends or local subordinates to summon them to one's house (esp. viii.43–4; xi.185–7). Compare Stanford (1958–59) ad xvii.383–5; Murray (1981) 98.

[38] After Alkinoos tells Odysseus he believes his stories, therefore, he compares him to a singer (xi.363–9).

cf. viii.479–81, 496–8; xxiv.197–8).[39] There is nonetheless no escaping the essentially fictional nature of such claims, and song within the *Odyssey* is at least equally well conceived as simply the final step in the extended, originally purely local process of gossip and rumor which binds this world together. As I have argued in detail above, tales originate in the place where the events they describe take place and some gradually spread abroad, frequently no longer in the mouths of eyewitnesses. If one of these stories becomes sufficiently popular in a place, one can assume, the local singer takes it up (esp. i.351–2; viii.73–5), relying on his Muse or, in less stylized or less mythologized terms, his own creative intelligence to supply the details for which men are so hungry.[40] His gift is to be able to present the story in a uniquely graceful and enchanting manner (esp. i.369–71; viii.90–1, 367–9; xvii.518–20). What he tells is nothing essentially new, however, but only what 'everyone' already knows, at least in general outline, and the subject of one of his performances can accordingly be referred to quite precisely as κλέα ἀνδρῶν, 'popular stories of men' (esp. viii.73; cf. IX.189).[41] Given the profoundly fragmented nature of the world in which he lives, a singer need have little fear that anyone will challenge the accuracy of his accounts. All the same, the ultimate origin of everything he sings is in what guests, neighbors and servants see or hear and report to one another and in the travellers' tales which, at least in the most important and provocative instances, result from this. Song is not the most basic source of κλέος in Achaian society, therefore, but its highest and in some ways most sophisticated form. All this has an important influence on the behavior of the characters within the *Odyssey* and indeed on the structure of the poem as a whole.

As a direct result of the extraordinary power and influence of local gossip and rumor in their society, individual Achaians do their best to secure a good reputation while simultaneously commenting on (and

[39] ἐπισταμένως in Alkinoos' comparison of Odysseus to a singer at xi.368 means not 'with extraordinary knowledge' but 'with striking technical skill'; cf. xvii.340–1 = xxi.43–4 (of a builder working wood); xii.307 (of experienced travellers preparing a meal); xix.422 (of men efficiently chopping meat); xix.456–7 (of skilled medical care).

[40] Cf. Finkelberg (1990) 296.

[41] This is what makes the song of the Sirens unique and thus so attractive: unlike normal singers, they do in fact know everything which has happened on the earth (xii.189–91). Cf. the *Iliad*-poet's description of the extraordinary position of the Muses at II.485–6.

frequently condemning) the behavior of others. This process is largely defined by two closely related terms, αἰδώς and νέμεσις, and these terms in turn are crucial to making sense of the function and significance of Homer's larger story.[42] αἰδώς is the sense of diffidence one Homeric individual properly feels toward another who enjoys a special protected status of some sort. It is felt by a child before a parent (vi.66–7; xx.343–4), for example, or a young unmarried woman before her uncle (vi.328–31; cf. xiii.341–3) or a wife before her husband or his bed (xvi.73–5; xix.524–7). It is also the proper attitude of a servant toward his master (xiv.145–6; xvii.188–9), a host toward a guest (e.g. xiv.388–9; xv.373; xix.191), an individual with power or wealth toward a suppliant (v.447–8; xxii.310–2 = 342–4) or a beggar (esp. xx.166–71), a young man toward an older one (iii.24), and anyone with any sense toward the gods and their oversight of human affairs (ix.269–71; xxi.27–8).[43] In addition, wealth and physical prowess increase the αἰδώς with which a man is treated, while poverty and an unimpressive appearance diminish it (viii.18–22; xi.358–61; xiv.233–4, 503–6).[44] αἰδώς thus bears a certain surface resemblance to what we call 'respect,' but is distinguished from it by the fact that its implications are essentially negative, so that it normally restrains action rather than requiring it.[45] Although Telemachos knows his basic purpose in coming to Pylos is to ask Nestor for information about Odysseus' whereabouts (esp. iii.15–6), for example, αἰδώς makes him hesitate before posing any questions (iii.24; cf. iii.14), and he assumes the old king and Menelaos will both feel a similar reluctance (μ' αἰδόμενος) to offer him bad news, given that he is their guest and the son of one of their best friends (iii.96–7 = iv.326–7). αἰδώς also makes Telemachos unwilling to expel Penelope from his house, much

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[42] For αἰδώς and νέμεσις, cf. Eustathius 923.16–21; 1434.29–37; *LfgrE* 270–3 s.v. αἴδομαι, αἰδέομαι, 279–80 s.v. αἰδώς; von Erffa (1937) 4–43; Verdenius (1945) 47–60; Cheyns (1967); Riedinger (1980); Scott (1980); Cairns (1993) 48–146. There are shorter discussions in Murray (1924) 83–9; Adkins (1960) 43–9; North (1966) 5–8; Redfield (1975) 113–9; Fuqua (1991) 50–1.

[43] For the individuals and offices which deserve αἰδώς, see von Erffa (1937) 10–3; Riedinger (1980) 62–4; Scott (1980) 18–23.

[44] Thus on Scheria Odysseus is treated with no particular αἰδώς by Euryalos, who scorns him because of his ignoble appearance (viii.159–64), although his extraordinary display with the discus alters the situation radically (viii.186–240, esp. 239–40), precisely as Athena intended (ὥς κεν Φαιήκεσσι . . . γένοιτο/ δεινός τ' αἰδοῖός τε viii.18–23).

[45] Verdenius (1945) 48, 51; cf. Redfield (1975) 116; Riedinger (1980) 65, 67; Cairns (1993) 48.

as he would like to be rid of her (xx.341–4), just as it prevents Nausikaa from mentioning the marriage which is so much on her mind to her father (vi.66–7).[46] In essence, therefore, αἰδώς is an acknowledgment of the special claims of another individual expressed as a restraint of one's own natural impulses and desires and is thus a fundamentally social phenomenon, with the result that to fail to respond with αἰδώς when one ought to become an assault on all civilized values almost by definition.[47] This is to be ἀναιδής ('without αἰδώς') or, put another way, to behave hybristically (ὑβρίζειν),[48] and the reaction such a display evokes is a mixture of shock, anger, outrage and bitter comment, known collectively as νέμεσις.

At its most basic, νέμεσις is a negative judgment passed by one Homeric individual on the behavior of another in connection with a situation properly governed by αἰδώς.[49] The fact that Telemachos is restrained from driving Penelope out of the house by αἰδώς (xx.343–4), for example, can be expressed in another way as a fear of νέμεσις (ii.130–7): were he to treat his mother inappropriately, other members of his society would think (and speak) badly of him, and as a result he will not do it. So too when the boy awakes from his daydream in Book i to see a stranger standing unnoticed before his door, he immediately goes out to bring him in and thus ward off the νέμεσις

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[46] Note also xviii.182–4, where αἰδώς renders Penelope unwilling to be seen unattended by the Suitors (xviii.158–60); viii.321–4, where it prevents the female Olympians from going to see Ares and Aphrodite trapped in bed, although no such feeling holds back Poseidon, Hermes and Apollo; and xvii.186–90, where it keeps Eumaios from disobeying his master's orders, unfortunate though they seem. A beggar, on the other hand, is compelled by poverty to approach everyone with his requests and therefore cannot by definition practice 'appropriate' diffidence (xvii.345–7, 576–8), although there must still be some limits on his behavior (xvii.446–9).

[47] On the fundamentally social character of αἰδώς, cf. von Erffa (1937) 6–9; Verdenius (1945) 37; Cheyns (1967) 11; Riedinger (1980) 66; Scott (1980) *passim*; Cairns (1993) *passim*.

[48] Note esp. xxiii.63–6, where Penelope equates the Suitors' ὕβρις with their failure to honor any man who came to them, i.e. their complete lack of αἰδώς. Cf. xx.170–1, where Odysseus says the Suitors devise evils 'acting out of ὕβρις' (ὑβρίζοντες) and lack any portion of αἰδώς; i.227–9, 253–4, where Athena first describes them as behaving hybristically (ὑβρίζοντες), so that any sensible person who saw them would feel νέμεσις, and then calls them ἀναιδῆς. For ἀναιδῆς, see von Erffa 19–20; for the connection between ὕβρις and a lack of αἰδώς, see Cheyns (1967) 6–8; for ὕβρις as a violation of social roles and expectations, see Fisher (1976); Michelini (1978), esp. 36–9.

[49] Cf. von Erffa (1937) 30–5, none of whose ten alleged exceptions to this definition in the *Odyssey* hold up to close inspection; Cheyns (1967) 3, 10–2; Redfield (1975) 116; Riedinger (1980) 69–70.

neighbors and passers-by would feel if they witnessed such an outrageous breach of proper behavior (νεμεσσήθη δ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ i.119–20).[50] In more general terms, νέμεσις is simply the natural response of any Homeric character to an apparent misunderstanding of (or open disregard for) correct social action and so the established social hierarchy.[51] To refuse a just offer of compensation for damages is thus to risk incurring νέμεσις (cf. xxii.55–9), as is to keep suitors waiting endlessly for a decision after one has been officially widowed (cf. xx.328–32), or to cry at length in public (xix.116–22) or even to wear disreputable clothing when this is unnecessary (xxii.487–9; cf. vi.26–30, 60–5).[52] In addition, because νέμεσις is so closely connected to individual social status, it may easily settle on one individual but not another when both are engaging in the same activity. When the Suitors take their turns in the contest of the bow, for example, this is acceptable for them but they respond with νέμεσις to the Stranger's proposal that he might participate as well (xxi.285). He is a beggar who should count himself fortunate that his presence in their company is tolerated at all (esp. xxi.289–92), and at the same time his success where they have failed would expose them to reproach within the community (xxi.286, 323–9). In either case, his words and actions suggest he does not know his place, which is to say he does not feel the proper degree of αἰδώς toward them.[53]

To feel αἰδώς or νέμεσις is thus to acknowledge that the individuals within a community are all accountable to one another for their behavior; to defy νέμεσις, i.e. to fail to display a proper sense of αἰδώς, is by definition to be spoken of unfavorably and thus to become a sort of social outlaw. In matters of no great importance, one Homeric individual will occasionally claim to excuse another from νέμεσις by insisting that what he or she has done is not a violation

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[50] With Stanford (1958–59) ad loc., therefore, I take this phrase to mean 'he felt concern in his heart about the νέμεσις of others'; cf. i.263; ii.138–45; iv.158–60. For the association between νέμεσις and hospitality, cf. i.158–60; iv.69–71; Riedinger (1980) 72. To abuse a beggar is also to risk confronting νέμεσις (xvii.481–3), since he too is protected by αἰδώς (esp. xx.166–71).

[51] Indeed, in Hesiod's roughly contemporary *Op.* 197–200, the final collapse of human society is marked by the departure of Αἰδώς and Νέμεσις together from the earth.

[52] Cf. Redfield (1975) 117.

[53] Cf. xxi.167–74, where Antinoos reacts with νέμεσις to Leodes' disappointed prediction that none of the Suitors will be able to string the bow which has bested him; he has misestimated the company he is keeping, Antinoos suggests, and thus misunderstood his place in the world.

of αἰδώς, given the circumstances. Although weeping publicly and at length is generally unacceptable in Achaian society (esp. xix.116–22) and must accordingly be concealed (esp. viii.83–6 αἴδετο γὰρ Φαίηκας), for example, it is several times forgiven on the ground that it must be for the sufferings of someone else (iv.195–8; xix.263–6; cf. viii.577–86). These are special, limited exemptions made out of personal respect (iv.190–2; xix.262) or a manipulative desire to contrast the addressee's previous ('excusable') actions with his or her current ('inexcusable') behavior (xx.324–37), however, and are very much the exception rather than the rule. Instead, the public condemnation which arises from νέμεσις is generally swift and uncompromising. The anonymous passer-by who hears what appears to be a wedding going on within Odysseus' palace in Book xxiii immediately declares Penelope 'hard-hearted' (σχετλίη) for not continuing to wait for her husband (xxiii.148–51), for example, despite the fact that it is now twenty years since he was heard of last and she has good reason for having finally given in (xviii.257–71). So too Nausikaa's contacts with Odysseus are entirely innocent and even driven by commendable motives (esp. vi.191–3), but she knows the men in the marketplace will say unpleasant things about her if the two of them are seen on the road together (esp. vi.273–4).[54] As the hero himself notes a little later on, 'We human beings have a tendency to put a bad construction on things' (δύσζηλοι γάρ τ' εἰμὲν ἐπὶ χθονὶ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων) (vii.307), and κλέος ἐσθλόν is accordingly a relatively fragile commodity. One reason for this may be simple human viciousness, combined with a profound consciousness of social class (esp. vi.275; xxi.324).[55] From a more positive perspective, however, gossip and rumor, and thus ultimately song as well, play an important role in preserving what Homer's characters take to be the proper human order by allowing apparently good actions to be held up for emulation (esp. i.298–302; iii.196–200), while bad ones serve as examples of the sort of thing to be avoided (esp. i.46–7; cf. xxii.372–4).[56] That fact in turn, when

[54] She does not manage the same deception with her parents (esp. vii.233–9), but it is worth noting that Arete avoids exposing the fact until her guests have all gone home and the maids are otherwise occupied (vii.228–32).

[55] Note that Nausikaa does not seem to regard what might be said about her as an outrage, however, and in fact admits she would herself be equally censorious toward another girl who acted indiscreetly in a similar situation (vi.286–8).

[56] Cf. the radically polarized terms of Alkinoos' request for information about the people Odysseus visited: 'which were harsh and savage and unjust, and which respect their guests and the gods' (viii.575–6), and note the remarks of Hunter (1990)

combined with the way in which such tales are created and passed on from one individual and place to the next and in some cases even converted into song, means that κλέος presents a very peculiar picture of the world.

The specific content of gossip and rumor in Achaian society is sharply divided along gender lines.[57] For men, what matters is to be a good counsellor and fighter, and this is accordingly precisely what Telemachos claims is always said of Odysseus (esp. xvi.241–2; cf. iii.126–9; iv.240–89; ix.19–20). Should a man's sons be equally gifted, Menelaos insists, he is left with very little to complain of (iv.204–11; cf. xi.510–32). Talk about women, on the other hand, is generally concerned with sexual purity or the lack thereof and with associated issues such as sexual attractiveness; alternatively, it has to do with intelligence, which includes skill at handicrafts.[58] The gossip about which Nausikaa worries, for example, has to do with the appearance she will make at her wedding (vi.27–30), her rejection of her local suitors (vi.282–4) and the possibility that she may be thought to be intimately involved with the Stranger (vi.276–81).[59] When Odysseus attempts to praise her to her parents, on the other hand, he stresses her thoughtfulness (vii.292–6), and Alkinoos unquestioningly accepts the importance of this in a woman, faulting his daughter only for not being even more thorough-going in her good behavior (vii.299–301). So too when Odysseus describes his meeting with Tyro, Antiope, Alkmene and other traditional heroines in the Underworld, he focuses almost entirely on their erotic life and thus the children they produced (e.g. xi.237–54, 258–62), although he also makes occasional reference to their beauty and desirability (e.g. xi.281, 287–8) or to their sexual treachery (xi.326–7). Antinoos, however, says it is specifically cleverness and skill (ἔργα τ' ἐπίστασθαι περικαλλέα καὶ φρένας ἐσθλάς) which distinguished these women (ii.117–20), and the fact

299–300. For the opposition of blame and praise in Homeric poetry, see Nagy (1979); for poetry as a repository of social values, see Thalmann (1984) 113–6.

[57] For an intriguing modern parallel, see Peristiany (1966).

[58] Cf. Penelope's description of the daughters of Pandareos, to whom the gods granted beauty and skill in handiwork (xx.70–2), and the set of attributes assigned Athena when she appears to Odysseus in an ideal form, 'like to a woman who is handsome and tall and knows glorious works' (xiii.288–9 = xvi.157–8). For women's αἰδώς, cf. Cairns (1993) 120–35.

[59] Note Odysseus' apparently similar understanding of the nature of female reputations when he tells Alkinoos he did not enter the city with his daughter in order to avoid his anger if he saw the two of them together (vii.303–7).

that these are characteristics of Penelope too can be expressed another way by saying that stories can and will also be told of her (cf. ii.89–110).[60] The more completely any individual satisfies (or fails to satisfy) these ideals, in other words, the more likely his or her tale is to be repeated and thus to spread throughout the world, and one direct result of this Darwinian struggle for attention and survival is that narrators have an implicit incentive to 'improve' the stories they tell. Even if Nausikaa has not had sex with the anonymous stranger, therefore, it is likely to be implied she has (vi.275–85), while no-one who believes Penelope has remarried will miss the opportunity for calling her a slut (xxiii.148–51). Another and more significant result is that particular prominence comes to be given to a few 'highly significant' (i.e. morally polarized) tales, and this tendency is naturally most pronounced in those stories which have been the most rigorously and constantly reworked and retold, which is to say in song (e.g. iii.203–4). That fact in turn, of course, has substantial implications for how we are to understand Homer's own larger story.

At the end of the *Odyssey*, Agamemnon insists his brutally treacherous wife Klytemestra will one day be the subject of an ἀοιδή (xxiv.199–201), as will the wise and faithful Penelope (xxiv.194–8). Their stories represent extreme examples of female good and evil as their society defines them, after all, and will accordingly be told over and over again throughout the Achaian world. So too the growth of Odysseus' fame is already underway within the poem itself, as rumors of the murder of the Suitors spread first among the Ithacans (xxiv.413–4) and then abroad (xxiv.418–9; cf. xxiv.353–5, 443–9) where someday, one assumes, men will grow eager for the details of what actually happened and a 'divinely inspired' singer like Demodokos or Phemios will do his best to accommodate them (cf. i.1–10; xxiv.197–8). As Agamemnon says, stories of this sort are to be taken seriously as comments on human life and its possibilities and problems. At the same time, Odysseus' successful return to Ithaca seems so unlikely and Athena's active intervention on his behalf so foreign to our own

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[60] It is accordingly the intelligence (νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα μῆτιν) her care for her guest's needs can be taken to reflect which Penelope hopes will guarantee her good κλέος 'among all men' (xix.325–8). On this passage and others like it, cf. Pedrick (1988) 86–91, 93–7; on the connections between δόλοι and female κλέος, cf. Segal (1983) 31. Later on, Eurymachos expands the list of Penelope's virtues to include the full spectrum of those normally assigned to women: 'since you are beyond all in appearance and stature and a well-balanced mind within' (xviii.248–9).

experience of the world, that it is difficult to see what use or sense we are to make of this great, allegedly exemplary tale. This book is fundamentally an attempt to confront that question. I begin with a study of the most important rumor within the world the *Odyssey* imagines, that of the house of Agamemnon.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STORIES OF AGAMEMNON

The story of the *Odyssey* begins, oddly enough, not with the hero himself but with Zeus' tale of Aigisthos and Orestes (i.28–43), just as the murdered king's own bitter description of his death and the contrast it provides with Odysseus' triumph virtually brings the epic to its close (xxiv.95–7, 192–202; cf. xxiv.24–34).[1] It has now become something of a critical commonplace that the Mycenean saga serves as a foil for the larger story of the Ithacan hero and his family.[2] The story of Agamemnon's death is not the same each time it is told, however, for individual narrators routinely adapt it to their own purposes, while the characters who listen to these tales understand and interpret them in accord with their own plans and preoccupations. The poet himself, meanwhile, uses the accumulating force of these various Oresteias to deceive, mislead, frighten and intrigue his audience. Agamemnon's murder and the revenge eventually taken for him thus function as a paradigm not just of the saga of Odysseus and his family, but also of the complexities of the interrelated processes of telling and listening to stories in the world of the Achaians and in that of Homer and ourselves as well.

As Nestor's insistence that even the relatively isolated Ithacans must have heard of Agamemnon's death at the hands of Aigisthos (iii.193–4) makes clear, this is the rumor *par excellence* in Achaian society.[3] As a consequence, it is referred to over and over again in the course of the *Odyssey* (i.29–30, 35–43, 298–300; iii.193–8, 234–5,

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[1] An earlier version of this chapter appeared as Olson (1990).

[2] That there is a connection between the two tales is an observation at least as old as Snider (1895) 16, but the scheme received its decisive modern formulation in D'Arms and Hulley (1946). See also Woodhouse (1930) 140–1, 246–7; Duering (1943) 95; Hommel (1955), esp. 239–42; Hölscher (1967); Delasanta (1967) 56–9; Edwards (1985) 27–8; March (1987) 84–6; Heubeck and West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) 16–7 and 60, respectively; Hölscher (1989) 94–102, 297–310; Katz (1991) 29–53.

[3] On the early history of the Agamemnon-story in the literary tradition, see Duering (1943); Alsina (1959); Lesky (1967), esp. 10–7; Prag (1985) 68–73; Garvie (1986) ix–xxvi; Davies (1987); March (1987) 81–98. For the artistic tradition, see Vermeule (1966); Davies (1969); Prag (1985), esp. 1–60.

255–312; iv.91–2, 514–37; xi.409–34, 452–3; xiii.383–4; xxiv.96–7, 199–200; cf. i.46–7, 326–7; iv.546–7; xi.387–9 = xxiv.20–2) and is used insistently, as κλέος regularly is, to illustrate how human beings ought or ought not to behave (e.g. i.32–43, 46–7, 298–302; iii.193–200; xi.441–3, 455–6). The broad outlines of the story are firmly established: when Agamemnon returned home from the war at Troy, he was assassinated by Aigisthos and vengeance for him was eventually taken by Orestes. The details of what happened nonetheless remain somewhat obscure (esp. iii.243–52), to the extent that even Agamemnon himself does not know much of what actually went on in his house and family (esp. xi.457–61). So too in the case of Homer's larger story, it is a reasonable if unprovable assumption that the text we have somehow represents a retelling of a story broadly familiar to much of its original audience.[4] Every individual auditor would have brought with him or her a slightly different experience of the tale: for a few, it might have been entirely new; many would have been familiar with competing but perhaps closely related versions told by other storytellers or singers; some might have heard Homer himself describe Odysseus' adventures on a previous occasion. All the same, what was going to happen could probably have been predicted, although only in general terms, and what Aristotle wrote four centuries later about tragedy was thus most likely true for oral epic as well: a poet can develop a story as he likes, but he is not free to alter what are understood to be its basic 'facts,' such as that Klytemestra can be killed only by Orestes (*Po.* 1453b21–6).[5] Morrison has shown that the *Iliad*-poet generates tension and thus interest in his account of Achilles' wrath by repeatedly implying that, contrary to all knowledge and expectation, Hektor will burn the Achaian ships.[6] So too Willcock, following Kakridis, has demonstrated that the same singer and his characters feel a remarkable degree of freedom to adapt mythological and other paradeigmata to fit more precisely the

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[4] I follow Lord (1953) 131–3; (1960) 148–57; Janko (1990); and Powell (1991), esp. 228–30, in believing that the *Odyssey* we have is a faithful copy of a song sung sometime in the late 8th century B.C.E. That the poem is the product of an extraordinary recording session seems to me beyond doubt, and it is thus possible that it is both longer and more complex than those Homer normally performed. I nonetheless assume that the singer's instincts and orientation remained essentially oral and that his story assumes a typical contemporary audience.

[5] On the importance of Homer for Aristotle's understanding of tragedy, see Hogan (1973). On the dangers of overestimating Homer's originality, see Combellack (1976).

[6] Morrison (1992) 73–93.

situations on which he or they wish to comment.[7] The tales of Agamemnon serve a similar purpose for the poet of the *Odyssey* by controlling the expectations and reactions of his audience. Odysseus 'should' return to Ithaca and take revenge upon his enemies, but it seems for thousands of lines entirely possible that he will not and that this latest version of his tale will veer off in an unexpected but not entirely unanticipated direction. The way in which the tale of Agamemnon is used and reused by individual narrators within the *Odyssey* is thus both characteristic of the profoundly oral world in which they live and a very deliberate and effective aspect of Homer's craft and so of κλέος at work.

The story of the *Odyssey* begins with a description of the subject of Zeus' musings in the Assembly of the gods, which is the sorry behavior of human beings in general and of 'faultless Aigisthos, whom Orestes, far-famed son of Agamemnon, killed' in particular (i.29–30). This brief initial summary of the Mycenean saga is the poet's (or the Muse's) own and, by leaving Klytemestra wholly out of the picture, suggests from the first that this will be a tale of men and of conflict between men, set in a man's world (cf. i.1). All the same, no specific interpretation of the Oresteia-story is offered here and no direct application of it is made to what is to come. The question of the story's meaning is thus implicitly left open, and in the seventy-five lines which follow Zeus and Athena, acting in one sense independently but also under the direct control of the poet, take up the tale and shape and adapt it to their own purposes. Neither retelling, however, offers Homer's audience any consistent or reassuring foreshadowing of what will happen in this version of Odysseus' homecoming.

Zeus, the epic's first independent speaker, is also its first independent storyteller and begins his version of the Oresteia at i.35. Despite his indignant protest at i.64–7, the king of the gods has no thought at all for Odysseus at this point. Instead, he brings Aigisthos up only as part of a larger complaint about the actions of human beings, who get troubles, he insists, 'by their own recklessness' (σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν) and then foolishly blame the gods (i.32–4).[8] Aigisthos in particular, Zeus remembers, was warned not to court Agamemnon's

[7] Willcock (1964), esp. 141–2, 147–53; (1977); cf. Kakridis (1949) 18–27, 96–105. Important related discussions include Heubeck (1954) 19–22; Gaisser (1969); Braswell (1971); Lang (1983); Andersen (1990).

[8] For the theological problems raised at the beginning of Book i, see Chapter 10.

wife or kill him when he returned. Nevertheless he did so and accordingly paid the price for his decision when Orestes began to long for his fatherland (i.35–43). Zeus is not telling this story with any intention of setting the intellectual stage for a Homeric epic, but is simply complaining to his assembled fellow deities (i.26–7) about mortal folly and unreasonableness. Indeed, he presents his version of the Mycenean saga in order to bring out one point only: that he and the other Olympians are not responsible for the troubles human beings get beyond their portion (esp. i.34). Modern readers have often been tempted to compare the references made to the Mycenean saga later in Book i (esp. i.298–300) and thus to connect Zeus' description of Aigisthos' outrages with the behavior of the Suitors on Ithaca, and the vengeance extracted by his Orestes with the part Telemachos takes in the fighting toward the end of Homer's story (xxii.91–309).[9] For an audience which experiences the *Odyssey* as an unfolding oral narrative heard from one end to the other rather than read, however, no such connections are necessary or perhaps even possible. For them, Aigisthos might seem to represent in a vague general way the troubles they know await Odysseus on Ithaca (i.18–9). All the same, they have no compelling reason to think specifically of the Suitors and Telemachos when they hear of Aigisthos and Orestes, for no mention has yet been made in the poem of these characters.[10] Unlike the Olympians in i.26–95, on the other hand, they have heard the prologue and in particular have been introduced there to the theme of the exile Odysseus, who has begun to pine for his homeland.[11] For them, therefore, a much stronger potential connection between the two stories has already emerged: Odysseus may be preparing to play Orestes by returning to Ithaca to take revenge for the wrongs being done him there.[12]

Athena responds to her father's complaint by taking up his story and turning it to her own different yet equally immediate purposes,

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[9] E.g. Bassett (1923) 346–7; Duckworth (1933) 46–8; West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad i.37ff.

[10] Telemachos is not mentioned until i.88; the Suitors are introduced at i.91–2. Even if Homer's audience did make this connection, the Agamemnon-paradigm would be less reassuring for them than it is for modern readers, who know and study a fixed text, since the implication of the model is clearly that Odysseus, like Agamemnon, will be murdered when he reaches home.

[11] νόστου κεχρημένον i.13; οἰκόνδε νεέσθαι/ εἰς Ἰθάκην i.17–8; πάρος ἣν γαῖαν ἱκέσθαι i.21; cf. i.49, 57–9, 75–7, 83, 87.

[12] Cf. Duering (1943) 96.

which once again have nothing to do with foreshadowing the course of the epic as a whole.[13] Aigisthos deserved his fate, she acknowledges (i.46–7), but she quickly directs Zeus' attention to another case as well: her favorite, Odysseus, trapped against his will on Kalypso's island (i.48–62). Athena's goal within the narrative context of the Assembly on Olympos is thus only to use the Oresteia-story to influence her father. Here in Odysseus is another mortal, she suggests, another example of the race about whose misbehavior and ingratitude he has just complained (esp. i.32–4). Although the gods intervened on behalf of the first (cf. i.37–43), he foolishly rejected their advice and has accordingly paid the deserved penalty (i.46–7). The fact of the matter is, however, that the case of Odysseus seems to put the lie to the theodicy Zeus has just outlined, for he suffers now from apparent divine malevolence and neglect and seems to have no control over his fate. Athena therefore asks that her father intervene in this second case as well, by once again sending Hermes (i.84–7; cf. i.38).[14] Perhaps this time events in the human world will turn out differently.

The *Odyssey* thus opens with a sophisticated manipulation and exploration not only of the Oresteia-theme, but also of the entire problem of telling and interpreting stories. Homer initially introduces the Mycenean saga without comment, although with a distinctly masculine bias; Zeus seizes upon it to establish a particular basis for his general denunciation of human folly, and the poet uses these words to suggest a parallel between Odysseus and Orestes; Athena takes up the theme to suggest a troubling contrast between Aigisthos and Odysseus and to spur her father to action on behalf of the latter. Homer's audience may already have begun to suspect that the Mycenean saga will be an important standard for comparison throughout the poem. That it will have any single obvious significance, however, already seems unlikely.

When Athena arrives on Ithaca a few hundred lines later, she uses a new version of the Oresteia-story to urge another character into action. Part of her avowed purpose in visiting Odysseus' house is to

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[13] Athena's repeated νυ ... νυ ... νυ (i.59–62) suggests she is impatient with her father, but this does not mean that what she says is merely an aggressive *non sequitur*.

[14] Prag (1985) 68, notes that Hermes' mission to Aigisthos is mentioned nowhere else in Greek literature, and suggests the detail is an innovation designed to further the parallel with Odysseus. Cf. West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad i.37ff.

see to it that Telemachos wins his fair share of renown among men (i.95) and she therefore plays off the boy's fixation on the κλέος he has lost through his father's mysterious disappearance at sea (esp. i.237–43) to encourage him to oust the Suitors from his house (esp. i.294–6). Orestes won a great name for himself when he killed Aigisthos, she reminds him (i.298–300), and a similar reputation can be his if he will only act as he should (i.301–2). Like Homer's audience, Athena is well aware that Odysseus is alive and will return to Ithaca soon (esp. i.76–87). Telemachos is at least willing to argue publicly that his father is dead (e.g. i.161–2, 166–8), however, and Athena exploits this misconception by encouraging him to think of himself in the role of the avenging son.[15] At the same time, she neglects to mention Orestes' murder of his mother, for although tensions are clearly emerging between Telemachos and Penelope (i.249–51), it seems unlikely they will ever reach the point of bloodshed. The Oresteia Athena presents on Ithaca is thus quite carefully tailored to fit the situation she confronts in Odysseus' house and to accomplish her specific purposes there.[16] At the same time, both she and Telemachos ignore the fact that the Suitors have not killed Odysseus as Aigisthos killed Orestes' father Agamemnon (cf. i.299–300), and in that sense even the limited details of the rather circumscribed paradigm she offers him seem not entirely well-suited to his situation. For Homer's audience, which has heard Agamemnon's murder described in slightly more specific terms earlier in the poem (i.35–6, 39), however, the way in which the Mycenean king died now suddenly becomes significant. The character of Odysseus' return to his native island remains unspecified, after all, beyond the vague assurance that it will include further troubles (i.18–9), and Telemachos is now being encouraged to leave his own country (i.280–5) just as Orestes did (cf. i.41).[17] For anyone who knows (as the boy does not) that Odysseus may return in the meantime, therefore, the story Athena offers here implicitly suggests that he too may be murdered on his homecoming. Presumably this 'ought not' to happen. All the same, the Oresteia-model discreetly raises the possibility that, contrary to all expectation, it will be Telemachos rather than Odysseus who plays

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[15] On Odysseus' 'death' and return to life, see Holtsmark (1966); Newton (1984).

[16] Cf. Duckworth (1933) 46–7; Garvie (1986) xi; Hölscher (1989) 300–3; Katz (1991) 34–7.

[17] Athena has so far promised or explicitly planned nothing for Odysseus beyond the simple fact of his return to Ithaca (esp. i.83, 87; cf. i.76–7).

the part assigned him here by Athena, that of Orestes the avenger.

The Mycenean saga is alluded to one final time in Book i in Phemios' song of 'the baneful homecoming of the Achaians . . . from Troy' (i.326–7), and this brief retelling of the story also works to provoke questions and anxieties in the poem's external audience about what is to come.[18] Once again, Homer introduces questions of narrative selectivity and parochial interpretation into his tale from the very first. The Suitors are entranced by Phemios' song (i.325–6), as well they might be, since it suggests the ultimate justification for their courtship of Penelope: that Odysseus, like Agamemnon and so many others, died in the return from Troy.[19] Penelope herself, in fact, explicitly identifies her vanished husband with the other lost Greeks (i.340–4), and her tearful reaction to Phemios' song (i.336) acknowledges that it contains no obvious hint of any happy ending. Telemachos, like Homer's audience, is now a more privileged auditor, however, for he can think in terms of the Oresteia-story as a whole. For him, therefore, the νόστοι can be interpreted as paradigms not of loss but of opportunity: if his father is like Agamemnon, as everyone seems to acknowledge, he can be like Orestes (cf. i.298–302). It is accordingly not just hard-heartedness when he tells his mother to listen to what the bard is singing (i.353), for he recognizes a fuller, if still defective interpretation of Phemios' poem and therefore pointedly observes that 'not only Odysseus lost his homecoming day' (i.354). At the same time, Phemios' song contains one further novel and disturbing feature, which escapes the notice even of Odysseus' son but cannot fail to attract the attention of Homer's audience, who know who 'Mentes' really is. It was specifically Athena who devised the disastrous return of the Greeks (i.327), the singer notes, and this new detail raises disturbing questions about the goddess' ultimate trustworthiness and purposes in Book i. Although it is said in the poem's opening lines that all the gods except Poseidon pitied Odysseus (i.19–20), after all, she is the one directly responsible for the hero's impending arrival on Ithaca (esp. i.48–62, 81–7) and has already

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[18] The νόστος-catalogues of Nestor (iii.188–94) and Menelaos (iv.499–537, 555–60) make it clear that the stories of Agamemnon and Odysseus would have been at the center of any such song, and Nestor explicitly ties the fates of the two men together at iii.162–4. Cf. Hölscher (1989) 97–9.

[19] West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad i.325–7, notes the irony in the contrast between the contents of this song and the Suitors' ignorance of Mentes' real identity.

established herself as a crafty and deceptive character. Homer's audience thus has at least some reason to hear in Phemios' song the troubling suggestion that this story too may in the end be only a further extension of the theme of the 'wrath of Athena' so prominent in the other νόστοι.[20] Odysseus as well, the poet seems to hint, may be coming home to die.

The Oresteia-story is thus referred to repeatedly throughout Book i of the *Odyssey*, but no single authoritative interpretation of its significance emerges either for Homer's audience or for the characters within the poem, and every retelling and rehearing of it is in fact different in small but significant ways. Odysseus may emerge as another 'typically human' Aigisthos or he may instead be a counter-example of mortal self-control; he may come home to play Orestes or perhaps he will be Agamemnon. At any rate, the role of paternal avenger is specifically offered to Telemachos by Athena, whose own motives in this final, climactic νόστος are not altogether clear. While the Mycenean saga obviously has some profound significance for the story of Odysseus and his family, therefore, its content and its implications shift each time it is narrated. Indeed, on a slightly different level its most important function seems to be to stir up anxiety in Homer's external audience by suggesting that his apparently predictable tale still has the capacity to end in unexpected ways. Odysseus ought to return to Ithaca and kill the Suitors, but it is possible that he may instead be murdered, in which case revenge will have to be taken for him by Telemachos.

Homer and his characters continue to use the κλέος of events at Mycenae in purposeful and troubling ways when Nestor gives the poem's first true catalogue of νόστοι at iii.188–94. The old man sums up his brief initial story of Agamemnon (iii.193–4) with a profoundly positive evaluation of Orestes, whom he presents to Telemachos as the ideal son of a dead father and urges him to emulate (iii.195–200).[21] Nestor's words can certainly be read as a subtle compliment to and general encouragement of his young guest. He is not

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[20] For Athena's wrath against Odysseus as a central theme in Homer's story, see Clay (1983), esp. 46–50, 208–11, expanding an argument first put forward in Clay (1976).

[21] Nestor would seem to have no way of knowing independently whether Odysseus is actually dead (iii.184–5), but he never disputes Telemachos' assertion that he must be (iii.88–91). For this scene in general and the meaning of iii.231 in particular, see Cook (1994).

obviously urging the boy to kill the Suitors in the way Orestes killed Aigisthos, however, for the specific nature of the troubles on Ithaca has not yet entered the conversation. Indeed, even when it does, the old man seems to feel some doubt about the personal capacities of his interlocutor (iii.214–5) and therefore thinks first and foremost of the possibility that Odysseus himself might return (iii.216–7), although he appends to this the wish that Athena could stand beside his son as well (iii.218–24). When Nestor first mentions the story of Aigisthos, Agamemnon and Orestes, therefore, it has for him only a very general paradigmatic force: let Telemachos too be a good son, whatever that may mean (iii.196–200). Telemachos, along with Homer's external audience, on the other hand, has been primed by 'Mentes'' remarks in Book i to see the Mycenean saga as applying directly to events in his own house (i.298–302), and he accordingly draws a much closer association between the two stories, comparing the murder of Aigisthos to his own desire to kill the Suitors, albeit only by insisting he is no Orestes (iii.203–9). For Homer's audience, the boy's remarks about the gods' neglect of Odysseus and himself (iii.208–9) are deeply ironic, since they know Athena is standing next to him in disguise all the while, and Nestor's subsequent insistence that were the goddess to care for him as openly as she did for his father, some of the Suitors would quickly lose enthusiasm for their courting (iii.218–24), only adds to this effect. All the same, precisely what is being foreshadowed here remains unclear and anyone who cannot flip a few pages ahead in the text to be certain how Homer's tale will end could reasonably conclude that Odysseus is being cast once again as 'the new Agamemnon' and thus implicitly threatened with death. That Telemachos now declines to play the part of Orestes (iii.208–9, 226–8), therefore, only raises the further ugly possibility that this particular version of the story may not end in any effective revenge for the outrages being committed on Ithaca.

In direct response to Telemachos' repeated expressions of despair, Athena invokes the Mycenean saga yet again (iii.231–8) in terms which are still, if not openly pessimistic, at least profoundly ambiguous. She begins by telling the boy that the gods can easily do a great deal for those they love if they wish and can 'even bring a man back safe from a distant land' (καὶ τηλόθεν ἄνδρα σαώσαι iii.231). She concludes, however, with the observation that even the Olympians have no power over fate (iii.236–8). These are essentially conflicting assertions, and in between them Athena describes the murder of Agamemnon, who

came home only to die, insisting that even a late and difficult return is preferable to a fate like that (iii.232–5). Telemachos seems to take Athena's opening remarks about the possibility of divine assistance in a man's homecoming as overly optimistic at best and concludes that the gods have indeed allowed Odysseus to perish (iii.240–2; cf. iii.227–8), just as he has been insisting all along (cf. i.161–2, 166–8; iii.88–91). An audience which knows the boy's father is on his way back to Ithaca, on the other hand, could easily take the goddess' reference to the possibility of a homecoming late and after many troubles (iii.232–3) as an allusion to his return. They will thus undoubtedly be disturbed by a new detail she adds to this latest version of the story: that Agamemnon died specifically 'at the hearth' (ἐφέστιος iii.234).[22] Odysseus will certainly come home, Athena's version of the tale reminds them (cf. i.17–8), but her words hint again at the possibility that he may be killed in his own house if that is his fate, in which case there is nothing she can do to save him (iii.236–8). Her favor may then have to be reserved for Telemachos, as Nestor's earlier remarks had seemed to hint (iii.218–24), and it may be his homecoming in favor of which she will need to intervene (cf. iii.231).

Athena also introduces one other new detail into her story of Agamemnon, which is that the murdered king's wife had an equal share in the treachery leading up to his death (iii.235). None of the characters within the poem comment on this point, which remains largely irrelevant for them, since they all assume, with varying degrees of assurance or hypocrisy, that Odysseus is dead and that Penelope will therefore be of only marginal importance in what is to come on Ithaca. For an audience which knows for a certainty that the hero is alive and returning to his house, however, this additional detail brings up the issue of the Ithacan queen's character and behavior with particular force. Perhaps she will continue to be faithful to her husband, as she has been so far. All the same, other women in similar situations have betrayed their husbands before and Penelope has already established her credentials for δόλοι of all sorts by means of her treatment of the Suitors (ii.87–122). It is thus possible, this latest version of the Oresteia tentatively suggests, that she may yet give in to her suitors and become another Klytemestra, in which case her

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[22] Contrast iv.532–5; xi.409–11; xxiv.20–2, where the killing takes place at Aigisthos' house. On the problem of where Agamemnon lives and is assassinated, see Bill (1930).

husband's impending νόστος will end either in his death or in a dramatic reversal of the Mycenean pattern, as the returning husband kills his treacherous spouse. Once again this 'ought not' to happen, but the possibility that it will has now been voiced.

As the conversation in Pylos continues, Telemachos presses Nestor for further details of the story of Agamemnon (iii.248–52) but does his best to turn the old man's narrative to his own particular purposes. He asks first about Menelaos (iii.249; cf. iii.251–2), whom he plans to visit next (cf. i.93, 285), but quickly turns the focus of his questions to the details of Agamemnon's murder instead and in particular to how Aigisthos killed someone far better than himself and then escaped punishment at the hands of the dead man's brother (iii.249–50; cf. iii.252). The significance of this new area of interest is obvious: if Odysseus' fate remains obscure (cf. iii.184–5), Telemachos must kill the Suitors, if not openly then at least by guile (cf. i.287–8, 293–6). If he cannot play Orestes (cf. iii.205–9), therefore, he must imitate at least some aspects of the outward behavior of the murderous Aigisthos. Nestor responds to these questions with yet another retelling of the Agamemnon-story, which replies formally to Telemachos but ultimately reflects the old king's own opinions and concerns rather than those of his young guest (esp. iii.262–312). While the other Greeks were away at Troy, he says, Aigisthos remained at home with Klytemestra (iii.262–4). All the same, the seduction was not an easy or straightforward one. Instead, the queen's virtue remained intact for some unspecified period of time, during which she steadfastly resisted her suitor's advances 'for she had good sense' (φρεσὶ γὰρ κέχρητ' ἀγαθῇσι iii.265–6). In this resistance, Klytemestra was assisted by another man, a singer who had been given responsibility for her by Agamemnon when he left for Troy and who guarded her carefully (iii.267–8); only when he was out of the way did she finally give in to temptation and surrender herself voluntarily to her lover (iii.269–72).[23] Aigisthos then took her to his own house (iii.272), although only after the murder of Agamemnon did he seize control of the kingship (iii.304–5). During all this time, Menelaos was abroad, travelling among strange peoples and amassing wealth (iii.299–302, 312). When he finally returned home, it was too late, for his brother

[23] For Aigisthos' treatment of the singer as a symbol of the eclipse of the good κλέος of Agamemnon's house, see Andersen (1992) 14–7, responding to Scully (1981).

was dead and the killing had been avenged by another man (iii.309–12; cf. iii.255–61).

Nestor's story of Agamemnon is told almost entirely from Menelaos' perspective, with little attention to Orestes or his father, and this narrative innovation is both a response to Telemachos' specific question (iii.249, 251–2) and closely tied to the old man's final point: that Telemachos must not be like the Spartan king, who stayed away from his country for too long (iii.313–6). The emphasis on Klytemestra and particularly Nestor's otherwise odd insistence that she had good sense (iii.265–6), therefore, can be understood as at least in part a comment on the situation of Penelope.[24] The danger on Ithaca as well, after all, has to do not so much with the queen's fundamental virtue or good intentions as with her endurance (esp. ii.89–92; cf. ii.122–8). Like Klytemestra, Penelope is being offered an opportunity to betray her husband, long absent at Troy, and like Klytemestra yet again, she has not given in immediately to temptation. In the end, however, and despite all her alleged good sense, Klytemestra's resistance failed when the man who had been given authority over her in her husband's absence vanished from the scene. On Ithaca, that role is occupied by Mentor, to whom Odysseus gave charge over his household when he left for Troy (ii.225–7), but who is now apparently serving as Telemachos' escort on his journey abroad (esp. ii.267–95, 399–419). If Klytemestra voluntarily gave in to Aigisthos under precisely such circumstances, therefore, the possibility that Penelope will abruptly surrender to the Suitors must also be taken seriously.[25] Indeed, it is the fear of precisely such a development which Athena eventually uses to encourage Telemachos to return home from Sparta as quickly as possible (xv.14–23). An audience which is aware that the boy's father is on his way back to Ithaca, of course, will see an even larger significance in Nestor's story, since Odysseus is in fact available to play the part of Agamemnon if his wife for one reason or another becomes a second Klytemestra.

Homer raises similarly disturbing questions about what is to come in this Odyssey by means of Menelaos' (really the Old Man of the

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[24] Vermeule (1966) 11, attempts to explain this comment away by introducing new details into the story: "[This] does not make her a good woman corrupted; it only means she had good female sense, did not yield to Aegisthos' first seducing but waited and increased her price." Homer does not say this.

[25] This is the interpretation of Katz (1991) 45, and is preferable to my own original association of the missing guardian with Telemachos (Olson [1990] 66).

Sea's) story of Agamemnon at iv.512–37. At the banquet on the first night in Sparta, Menelaos mentions the part played by his brother's 'destructive wife' in his death (iv.91–2), and it is tempting to see in these remarks a reflection of the domestic tensions which lie not too far beneath the surface in the king's own household. Once Helen joins the party (iv.121–36), however, Menelaos drops the matter and even refers to Odysseus as the only one among the Argives to have lost his homecoming (iv.182), and on the next day turns his attention entirely to the guilt of Aigisthos (iv.512–37).[26] When Agamemnon finally reached his native land, Menelaos reports, it was with joy and no apparent suspicion that further troubles were in store for him (iv.521–3). Unfortunately, he was seen in advance by Aigisthos' watchman (iv.524–8) and met by an ambush of twenty select men (iv.530–1), who butchered him in a pitched fight at a feast (iv.532–7). Vengeance for the death was carried out by Orestes, Menelaos quietly admits (cf. iv.546–7); all he did himself was build a burial-mound for his brother in Egypt (iv.584) and attend the funeral in Argos (iv.547; cf. iii.309–11).

Menelaos offers no specific application of his story to Telemachos' situation, but one is clearly implicit in it. Part of Athena's apparently chaotic advice to Telemachos in Book i is that if he hears his father is dead, he ought to heap up a grave-mound for him and settle his affairs calmly (i.289–92). This is all Menelaos did for Agamemnon, and Telemachos thus has the same option open to him now if he remains unwilling to play the part of Orestes (cf. iii.205–9) and thus do what he ought (cf. i.294–300). Although he claims to regret his decision bitterly (esp. iv.93), moreover, Menelaos says he spent the time when he should have been returning to his country travelling about and growing rich in other lands (esp. iv.90–2; cf. iii.301–12; iv.81–5), and when Homer leaves Telemachos at iv.624 it is not altogether clear the boy will not make the same unfortunate decision, particularly when the scene in Sparta closes with his eager host's offer of magnificent gifts (iv.587–92, 613–9).[27] If Odysseus does play the part of Agamemnon, the poem's external audience is entitled to reflect, it is not yet apparent whether Telemachos will take the role

[26] Cf. Alsina (1959) 304. Olson (1990) 66, is a bit garbled in this connection.

[27] Menelaos does, in fact, suggest openly some Books later that his guest put off his homecoming in favor of gathering more property, but Telemachos then immediately turns the offer down (xv.80–91).

of Orestes or that of Menelaos. In addition, one other new detail in Menelaos' story seems designed to stir up anxiety in those listening to the epic being sung: Agamemnon's death is now said for the first time to have taken place at a banquet (iv.531, 534–5). If Telemachos does return to the endless feasting in the palace on Ithaca (e.g. ii.55–8), therefore, it may be to play the part of the Mycenean king and die. Indeed, this possibility is made even more immediate for Homer's audience when they, unlike the characters in Sparta, learn a little later on that an ambush of precisely twenty young thugs (cf. iv.530) awaits the prince upon his homecoming (esp. iv.669–72, 778–9, 842–7).[28]

One aspect of this constant, ever-shifting play of possibilities comes to an abrupt halt at the beginning of Book v, as the narrative turns away from Telemachos, who is promised a safe return to Ithaca in Athena's dream-vision to Penelope (iv.805–7, 825–8; cf. v.25–7), and Zeus affirms that it has always been his daughter's purpose that Odysseus come home and take revenge upon the Suitors (v.23–4). The central question of the story is thus now no longer whether the hero's return will be successful but how he will punish his enemies.[29] In the Books which follow, Homer continues to use the Mycenean saga on occasion to create irony and uneasy forebodings of the future. Odysseus' attempt to intimidate Polyphemos by boasting of his association with Agamemnon, 'whose κλέος is now the greatest under heaven' (ix.263–4), for example, takes on a very different flavor for anyone who knows (as the hero himself does not) that the king of Mycenae is most famous for having just been murdered. The most important function of the Oresteia-stories in the second third of the *Odyssey*, however, is to stir up further quiet concern in the mind of Homer's audience about the role Penelope is likely to play in events to come on Ithaca.[30]

Odysseus hears Agamemnon's story for the first time in Hades from the dead man himself (xi.409–34, 452–3) and summarizes the tale to Alkinoos and the Phaeacians as destruction 'by the will of an evil woman' (κακῆς ἰότητι γυναικός xi.384). Indeed, the Mycenean king devotes particular and painful attention in his account of his own

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[28] Cf. Edwards (1985) 29; Katz (1991) 46.

[29] See Chapter 7.

[30] Cf. Hölscher (1989) 303–4; Katz (1991) 48–53. For what may be a similar attempt by the poet to create doubts about the trustworthiness of Odysseus' wife elsewhere, see Rankin (1962).

death to the role played by the 'dog-eyed,' 'ruinous' Klytemestra, reserving his bitterest denunciations for her rather than Aigisthos (xi.421–34, 452–3). Odysseus must accordingly beware of Penelope when he returns home, Agamemnon insists, although she is apparently trustworthy in a way his own wife never was (xi.444–6), for there is no longer any trusting in women (xi.441–3, 455–6). Agamemnon's knowledge of both the situation on Ithaca and his own story is severely circumscribed, in that he knows nothing of the Suitors and Penelope's current dilemma or of the travels of Telemachos, on the one hand (cf. xi.447–51), or of how Klytemestra was seduced and Orestes took vengeance for him, on the other (cf. xi.457–61). For an audience which is familiar with all these details, there is an obvious irony in the dead king's assumption that no similar troubles await his friend on Ithaca (esp. xi.444–6), for although Odysseus may not be killed as Agamemnon was, their stories clearly comment in some way upon and echo one another. So too Agamemnon's question about his son (xi.457–61), although a natural one under the circumstances (cf. xi.492–3), is enough, despite the fact that Odysseus can tell him nothing of the boy (xi.463–4), to provoke thoughts once again in Homer's better-informed audience of Orestes' revenge and thus of Telemachos.[31] This Odyssey, after all, has already become in large part a Telemacheia, in the same way that Agamemnon's tale became, unbeknownst to him, an Oresteia. Precisely what part Odysseus' son will play in the rest of the story nonetheless remains obscure for many Books to come, as we are quietly reminded here.[32] The question the murdered king's bitter remarks pose explicitly, however, is what the torn and troubled Penelope will do (cf. iii.235, 265–72) and how Odysseus ought to deal with her when the two of them come face-to-face. Granted she is apparently loyal, but one can seemingly never tell about a Homeric woman's real intentions (cf. ii.91–2), as the horrible consequences of Agamemnon's own naiveté (esp. xi.430–2; cf. xi.450–3) make clear.[33]

Homer sounds very similar themes again in Book xiii, when his hero finally awakes on the beach in Ithaca. While in the Underworld, Odysseus acknowledges no direct connection between Agamem-

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[31] Cf. Hölscher (1989) 305–6.

[32] If Telemachos were to take the part of Agamemnon and be murdered, after all, generational roles might switch and Odysseus become his avenger.

[33] For the questions and possibilities raised by the figures Odysseus encounters in the Underworld, see Northrup (1980) 151–3.

non's story and his own (xi.436–9). When Athena now describes the situation in his house to him (xiii.377–81), however, he immediately compares himself to his murdered friend, insisting he has nearly fallen into the same sort of trap (xiii.383–5). The comparison seems at first glance an odd and inappropriate one, given that the goddess has just told him that his wife, unlike Klytemestra, remained faithful during all the years of his absence (xiii.379–81), but Odysseus is apparently alluding to the fact that other men are now courting her (cf. xiii.377–8) and may therefore try to kill him, just as Aigisthos murdered Agamemnon.[34] He still knows nothing of Telemachos or Orestes (cf. xi.463–4; xiii.412–23), after all, and the implications of the Mycenean pattern thus end for him in the threat to his own life. An audience which knows of both young men and has repeatedly heard the tale of Orestes' revenge, however, will once again be quick to recognize that Odysseus' story will inevitably be more complex than he himself yet realizes. Perhaps even more important, the mention of Agamemnon's death in the context of Odysseus' homecoming cannot help but raise again on some level for anyone who has just heard Book xi the question of Penelope's fidelity. When her behavior does become odd and obscure at xviii.158–303, therefore, the external audience is already primed to be disturbed, and when Odysseus is forced to decide how to deal with her in their interview in Book xix, it is easy to understand his caution.

As Homer's story continues, Odysseus defeats his rivals, regains control of his house and is reunited with his wife and son. The poet uses the Oresteia-theme only one more time, but in a way which stresses its importance and its function throughout the epic as a whole.[35] As Achilles and Agamemnon meet in the Underworld at the beginning of Book xxiv, an explicit and extended contrast is drawn between their deaths: Achilles' brought him glory and recognition (xxiv.36–94), while Agamemnon's was disgraceful (xxiv.24–34). Few details of the Mycenean king's story are given, but Achilles' remarks (esp. xxiv.34) and the short, stark description Agamemnon offers of his own murder (xxiv.95–7) create a sharp implicit contrast with the much happier homecoming of Odysseus. The Ithacan hero, it seems,

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[34] Athena's remark in xiii.333–4 that anyone else in Odysseus' situation would have rushed home immediately to see his wife and children, moreover, is clearly intended to recall the behavior of Agamemnon (xi.430–2, 450–1).

[35] Cf. Hölscher (1989) 306–8.

has escaped both the dangers of the war at Troy and the threatening pattern of events at Mycenae and is thus at least doubly blessed.[36] Both Achilles and Agamemnon are also accompanied by crowds of companions (xxiv.15–22) and these hangers-on, otherwise unnecessary to the action, invite further comparison with a third group of men, the Suitors, who now arrive in Hades *en masse* under the escort of Hermes (xxiv.99–100). They have not died gloriously in battle, as the various Achaian heroes did at Troy (cf. xxiv.15–8), but have been butchered ignobly in another man's halls, like Agamemnon and his companions (esp. xxiv.21–2). They are thus quite distinctly and on multiple counts the losers in the story, Odysseus the winner. Indeed, Agamemnon himself ultimately draws a careful contrast between his tale (and theirs) and that of his Ithacan friend, focussing specifically, as is his wont, on the different characters of the women involved and the consequences for the men with whom they kept company (xxiv.192–202; cf. xi.409–34, 450–3; xxiv.95–7).

In the end, therefore, the pattern of events in Mycenae is both reversed and fulfilled in Homer's story of Odysseus. Despite constant evil forebodings, the hero is not murdered by his deceitful wife and her lover(s) on his return from Troy (esp. xi.409–11), but plays the part of both Aigisthos, who killed his rival in his own halls (esp. iv.532–5; xxiv.21–2), and Orestes, who returned from exile to win great fame by taking revenge for his house and his honor (esp. i.40–1; iii.306–8). His son Telemachos also takes the part of Orestes by extracting vengeance for his dishonored father (esp. i.298–302), but without any need for the death of his parents. Despite his extended absence from Ithaca and the plots against him there, moreover, Telemachos avoids the fate of Agamemnon, who was murdered on his homecoming, as well as the shame of Menelaos, who returned to his country too late to take revenge (iii.311–2) and did nothing but heap up a burial-mound for his kinsman in a distant land (iv.584). Penelope, meanwhile, proves herself both the polar opposite of Klytemestra and her equal. Unlike the Mycenean queen, she does not give in to sexual temptation and betray her husband with another man (esp. xxiv.194–200), but she does earn a Klytemestra-like (esp. iii.235) reputation for tricks and treachery (ii.87–122; xxiv.125–41, esp. 126–7), in recognition of which Odysseus' victims ultimately assign her a substantial and perhaps even conscious role in their

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[36] Cf. Edwards (1985) 87–9.

murder (xxiv.167–9). In addition, she wins κλέος like that of Orestes (ii.125–6; xxiv.196–8; cf. i.298–9; iii.203–4), but precisely the opposite of that acquired by her Mycenean counterpart (cf. xxiv.199–202).[37] The Suitors, finally, try to imitate the initial success of Aigisthos, who seduced his lord's wife and murdered him on his homecoming (esp. iii.262–4, 272–5), but succeed only in sharing the villain's punishment (esp. i.43, 46–7) and in emulating the unfortunate Agamemnon, who was butchered ingloriously and all unawares at a feast in another man's house (esp. xxii.31–3; cf. iv.534–5).[38]

The basic appeal of the Mycenean saga for the Achaians themselves is obvious. Agamemnon was by far the greatest commander in the famous Trojan War (esp. ix.263–6; xxiv.24–7) but was destroyed in a horrible and degrading fashion, at least in part due to the faithlessness of his wife, after which a brutal and clearly justified revenge was taken by his son upon his killer. On the one hand, therefore, this is precisely the sort of sordid and resentful tale the κακώτεροι throughout the Homeric world enjoy (esp. vi.273–85; xxi.323–9; cf. xxiii.148–51), in that it depicts the sudden, unexpected humbling of someone once accounted great (esp. xxiv.24–34, 93–7). At the same time, Orestes' aggressive filial piety makes him a sort of shining light for others (esp. i.298–302; iii.196–200), while Aigisthos only gets what he so richly deserves (e.g. i.46–7). For all these reasons, Homer's characters repeat the story constantly to one another, reshaping and adapting it to their immediate needs and desires and using it to illustrate how men and women are and ought to be (e.g. i.32–43, 298–302; iii.193–200; xi.432–4; xxiv.199–202). The fit of the paradigm sometimes seems awkward and the demands it makes on apparently ordinary folk too high (esp. iii.203–9), but the process of telling and applying it to oneself and others is nonetheless a basic part of the social fabric of the Achaian world. Homer himself, meanwhile, uses these varying tales of Agamemnon's house to force his audience to listen with more interest and concern than they might otherwise think necessary to his own, in one sense very traditional song. They may well know how the story of Odysseus 'ought to end' and thus how it should both resemble and differ from the course of events in Mycenae. All the same, the poet uses his secondary

[37] Cf. Garvie (1986) xi; Pedrick (1988).

[38] For the killings in Book xxii as an example of a λόχος-pattern, see Edwards (1985) 27–38, esp. 35–7.

narrative to remind them that they cannot control or predict what he will tell them next. It is thus the very subtlety and flexibility of κλέος which lends it its peculiar power, and this in turn is a theme I will develop at considerable length and in a wide variety of ways here. As one preliminary means of doing so, I turn now to another, even more manipulative Homeric tale and to the question of the poet's own larger purposes with it.

CHAPTER THREE

THE WANDERINGS

When Odysseus washes up on the Scherian coast at v.441–57, he has lost his ships, his men, his share of the treasure from Troy and even the clothes off his back. What he has not lost is his reputation (e.g. i.344; iii.126–9; iv.240–89, 816), and over the course of the next seven Books he gradually establishes his identity among these strange and vaguely threatening people.[1] He does so in a very deliberate way, first by carefully controlling the stories by means of which he is introduced to his new hosts and then by offering them what turns out to be a highly tendentious account of his adventures since the fall of Troy (ix.39–xii.450). His goal is to respond to a very specific set of problems posed by his appearance and thus to suggest that things are not what they might seem to be. The poet himself, meanwhile, uses the tales of the Wanderings to answer long-standing questions about the character of his hero's return and to make a series of more general points about how men act in groups and how they must be governed as a consequence. On all its various level, therefore, κλέος here is once again not only and perhaps not even principally a reflection of the world, but instead an active intervention in it and an attempt to reach beyond its incoherent and confusing surface to the truth which allegedly lurks within.

Two strands of narrative intent must be separated from the very first here. Many modern critics have been tempted to see in the stories in Books ix–xii a process of character development, as Odysseus evolves from the headstrong and hybristic pirate of the attack on the Kikonians (ix.39–61) and the encounter with Polyphemos (ix.170–542) into the allegedly wiser and somewhat wilier man who arrives alone on the Scherian shore.[2] Although Homer remains in overall control of his story, however, the Wanderings are not

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[1] On the odd and unsettling atmosphere on Scheria, see Rose (1969), with the cautions and corrections of de Vries (1977); Tebben (1991); Reece (1993) 104–7. For a more traditional view, see Segal (1962). For the location of Odysseus' tale within the poem and its consequences and implications, cf. Suerbaum (1968).

[2] E.g. Bradley (1976); Rutherford (1986); Scully (1987); Friedrich (1987); (1991) 27–8.

straightforward narrative like (e.g.) the bulk of Books vii and viii. Instead, Odysseus is telling a retrospective tale to an audience which holds his future in its hands. He must offer them some explanation of how he spent the preceding nine years and of why he has arrived in their country friendless, shipless and utterly impoverished. In all other ways he is free to shape his tale as he will, however, and his apology therefore cannot be read as a simple documentary source for his past, and any 'development' which took place in him over the course of it would have to be understood as in the first instance a product of his own intentions as a narrator.[3] Perhaps even more to the point, Odysseus says nothing in his story to the effect that he is different now than he once was, and there is no difficulty in understanding him throughout it as a brilliant but entirely static character: wily, dangerous, virile, resourceful, a clever and instinctive liar, bold almost (but not quite) to a fault and deeply concerned for his men and his own reputation. The point of these stories must accordingly be sought elsewhere than in character development (a concept which, I will argue in more detail in the following chapter, is largely foreign to the storytelling style of the *Odyssey*-poet) and preferably in themes and concerns signalled explicitly in the text. Nor are these far to seek. Homer's own interests are apparent already in the first ten lines of the epic, which are insistent on the fact that a central concern of this tale of Odysseus must be the fate of the men who accompanied him on his journeys but did not make their way back to Ithaca (i.5–9). For a great hero to return from abroad without his companions, after all, raises a series of potentially very embarrassing questions (cf. xxiv.426–8): how can it be that he has failed to protect those who were so obviously dependent on him? is it not possible, perhaps even likely, that he is responsible for their destruction? and how did he manage to get away alive when all of them were lost? The 'recklessness' by means of which the poet claims

[3] For cognate approaches to the Wanderings, see Friedrich (1987a) 386–8; Most (1989); Doherty (1991a); de Jong (1992); cf. Scully (1987). A few basic elements of some of these stories are attested to by Homer or other characters in the course of the poem. Thus Zeus affirms that Odysseus blinded the Kyklops and so incurred Poseidon's wrath (i.68–9), and the hero's extended captivity on and eventual escape from Kalypso's island, as well as his visit to Kirke, are both obviously 'real' enough (i.51–7; v.14–5, 30–277; viii.447–53). Since the poet gives us no further information to work with or to use as a control, however, the naive question of how much of what Odysseus tells his hosts is true must be abandoned; contrast the approach of Parry (1994).

the comrades were destroyed (i.7–9) is immediately echoed in Zeus' tale of Aigisthos (esp. i.35–43) and then again in the outrages of the Suitors on Ithaca (esp. i.8–9 parallel to i.108). All the same, the Muse declines the poet's express invitation to begin 'from somewhere in these things' (τῶν ἁμόθεν i.10), i.e. with the Wanderings (cf. i.1–9), and tells instead of Telemachos' journeys (Books i–iv) and of his father's escape from Kalypso and arrival among the Phaeacians (Books v–viii). She (and Homer) thus leave the obviously very pressing problem of the companions aside for the moment, but simultaneously conspire to put the stories of the general Achaian departure from Troy (iii.130–83) and Odysseus' escape from Ogygia (v.55–vi.2) out of the way well before Book ix begins. The hero for his part, meanwhile, disposes of the question of how he came to be trapped with Kalypso relatively early on (vii.244–57; cf. xii.450–3) and then arranges to have the sack of Troy described by Demodokos just before giving up his name (viii.474–520). When he at last offers his apology, therefore, he is free to begin after the war is over (cf. ix.37–8) and to conclude with the disastrous departure from Thrinakia (xii.399–450). Indeed, the narrative focus which results is of a piece with his conduct throughout the previous two days.

When Odysseus first approaches Nausikaa on the Scherian coast, he is careful to characterize himself not as the isolated wanderer he might otherwise appear to be, but as a great if anonymous leader of men, fallen on hard times (vi.164–5). So too when he responds to Arete's initial suspicious questions about his identity (vii.237–9), he conceals everything significant about his past before his capture by Kalypso except the fact that he once had comrades who have perished (vii.241–97, esp. 251).[4] Although he does not yet give up his name, therefore, Odysseus also does not allow his basic social status to be underestimated, and over the course of the next day the fact that he is indeed someone to be reckoned with becomes gradually apparent: he is handsome and powerful (viii.18–23, 186–240) and quick to anger when provoked (viii.165–85), but also gracious and well-spoken when that is more appropriate (viii.382–4, 413–5).

The name 'Odysseus' is mentioned for the first time on Scheria in a song sung by Demodokos during the first feast in Book viii, describing a quarrel which arose between the Ithacan hero and Achilleus

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[4] On Odysseus' reticence and Alkinoos' question, see Fenik (1974) 5–60; Webber (1989).

at a banquet and caused Agamemnon to rejoice (viii.73–82). Demodokos' song contributes to the larger structure of Homer's poem by prefiguring Odysseus' confrontation with Euryalos a little later on (viii.158–85) and by suggesting an underlying opposition between βία on the one hand and μῆτις on the other.[5] At the same time, however, it is entirely appropriate to its immediate narrative context. Phaeacian society is marked by an intense interest in inter-male competition (esp. viii.100–3, 109–30, 145–8; cf. viii.370–1) and a strong tendency toward quarrelling and verbal aggression (esp. vii.16–7, 30–3; viii.158–64), if not by genuinely heroic achievements in either area (cf. viii.186–253). The local bard thus naturally presents the great heroes of the Trojan War as masculine arguers and competitors *par excellence*, while the joy Agamemnon feels at their confrontation is openly reflected in the pleasure the Phaeacian men take in listening to this tale at another, somewhat less turbulent, although not necessarily less significant sacrifice and feast (viii.90–1).[6] Although Odysseus clearly recognizes himself in what he hears (viii.83–6), however, he does not seize this obvious opportunity to reveal his identity to his hosts. Instead, he waits all through the day until a second great meal in Alkinoos' palace, at the end of which he asks Demodokos in a very flattering (viii.487–91) and manipulative (viii.496–8) manner to sing of his own role in filling the Wooden Horse with men and bringing it within the Trojan citadel (viii.492–5). Naturally this is not the simple call for information and entertainment it must appear to Odysseus' fellow-banqueters to be. He has been promised transport home this very evening (vii.317–23; cf. viii.31, 444–5), after all, and cannot help but know he must identify himself momentarily if he is to obtain it (cf. viii.28–30, 550–6).[7] He is thus on the very edge of having to give up his name and thus his story, and his request to hear of the Wooden Horse works to put the war at Troy in the narrative past (contrast viii.81–2), setting the stage for a fresh and compelling tale which his hosts cannot have heard before (cf. i.241–

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[5] On Demodokos' songs, see most recently Bliss (1968); Nagy (1979) 15–58; Edinger (1980); Braswell (1982); Newton (1987); Finkelberg (1987); Olson (1989); Brown (1989); Tebben (1991) 36–40.

[6] There is a further quiet irony to this song, in that it is once again a combination of Odysseus' presence and a fateful oracle which marks the 'beginning of trouble' for the audience (viii.79–82), in this case the Phaeacians themselves, although that fact only becomes apparent later (xiii.125–87; cf. viii.564–9).

[7] Cf. the observations of Roisman (1994) 5–7.

2) and which ought therefore to win the most favorable reception possible from them (cf. i.351–2).[8] In addition and even more important, the topic the hero suggests to Demodokos represents a subtle effort to control who it is he will soon be revealed to be, by replacing the singer's earlier image of Odysseus the quarreler and competitor (esp. viii.75–7), all too convincingly confirmed by events that morning on Scheria (esp. viii.165–79, 201–33), with a picture of the wily and successful leader of men (esp. viii.494–5).[9] Unfortunately, this essentially positive image, which Odysseus has been cultivating for himself ever since his initial meeting with Nausikaa on the beach (vi.164–5; cf. vii.251), brings with it its own peculiar set of problems and questions: if he is the great and brilliant commander of the Trojan War, who once had hundreds of troops behind him and must have received a substantial share of the booty when the city was sacked, how is it that he has come here alone and in such wretched circumstances? This is the problem Homer posed at the very beginning of his poem (i.5–9) and also the central concern of Odysseus' tale of his Wanderings.[10]

Demodokos' final song depicted Odysseus as the great military hero of the victory at Troy, and the abbreviated tale of the sack of Ismaros with which the Wanderings begin (ix.39–42) seems designed in part to evoke that image again and thus associate the narrator ever more closely with the famous warrior the Phaeacians thought they knew only through his κλέος.[11] There is no sign in the text that Odysseus sees this attack as in any way reprehensible or as a mistake *per se*; the Kikonians were Trojan allies (cf. II.846–7; XVII.73) and this is therefore simply heroic business as usual. What is instead important is that here for the first time he came into conflict with his men.[12] In

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[8] Demodokos seems to pay a bit more attention to the other Argives than Odysseus requested (esp. viii.516), but still tells the tale in such a way that even Menelaos is reduced to a secondary role (viii.517–8). Cf. the observations of Tebben (1991) 40; Pedrick (1992) 61–2. For Odysseus' request and its motivation, see also Harrison (1971); Dolin (1973); Roisman (1994) 5–7.

[9] Note the poet's parallel strategy at viii.521–31, where Odysseus' reaction to Demodokos' song is compared to that of a woman enslaved after her husband has died fighting against invaders, thus transforming the hero into a victim whose story of abuse and ill-treatment (esp. viii.527–9) properly begins with the destruction of Troy (cf. i.1–2).

[10] Schwartz (1924) 44–5, put forward a similar thesis, although very briefly and in a profoundly analytic context.

[11] Note the emphatic first-person singular here: ἐγὼ πόλιν ἔπραθον (ix.40).

[12] Cf. Louden (1993) 9–10.

an initial example of the odd prescience which he claims characterized him again in the Kyklops-story a little later (ix.213–5), Odysseus says that he himself was for fleeing immediately once the city had been taken but that his companions—'greatly foolish' (μέγα νήπιοι; cf. i.8)—refused to be persuaded (ix.43–4). A drunken feast ensued on the beach (ix.45–6) and the Kikonians used the opportunity to rally their forces (ix.47–50), attacking at dawn the next day and routing their enemies, killing six men out of every ship (ix.51–61).

Odysseus thus begins the story of his return from Troy by presenting the other Ithacan sailors as fools who refused to listen to his good advice and instead gave in to their own misguided appetites, bringing destruction upon themselves as a result. He was in one sense their leader, in that he could argue, urge and even order them to do what he considered best. All the same, he had no formal or enforceable authority over them and could not compel them to do anything if they opposed him *en masse* (ix.43–4). After this telling initial catastrophe, he reports, he took special care to see that the men who died were remembered, and his crews seem to have acquiesced in this (ix.64–6; n.b. μοι). So too in the land of the Lotos-Eaters to which they were driven next (ix.83–104), he was able first to order three men to go off as scouts (ix.88–90) and then to force them back to the boat when they ate the lotos and tie them down there despite their protests (ix.98–9). He was only able to save the situation in this way, however, because his other companions responded readily to his command to embark and row away out of fear of losing their homecoming (ix.100–4). The social roots and larger implications of the tensions between him and his crew come into considerably sharper focus in the story of Polyphemos which follows (ix.106–542).[13]

Odysseus puts a strong and consistent spin on the narrative from the very first here, aggressively defending himself against an implied charge of having brought about the death of six of his comrades by his own recklessness (cf. x.435–7). He begins by characterizing the Kyklopes generally as lawless and overbearing (ix.106), and Polyphemos in particular first as someone who knew ἀθεμίστια and scarcely resembled a man (ix.188–91) and then a little later on, in another odd, allegedly prescient flash transparently designed to shape his audience's

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[13] On the alleged folk-tale origins of this story, see Page (1955) 1–20; Glenn (1971); and the responses of Schein (1970); and O'Sullivan (1987). For a provocative reading of the story's roots in individual psychology, see Austin (1983).

understanding of what follows, as a savage unaware of δίκας or θέμιστας (ix.213–5; cf. ix.428).[14] He also makes a series of sneering remarks about the limitations the Kyklopes' lack of technological sophistication and especially their inability to sail imposed upon them (esp. ix.125–30), and compares the blinding of Polyphemos specifically to boring through a ship's timber (ix.382–8) and tempering iron (ix.389–94), two advanced human abilities such 'crude and backward' creatures ought not to understand.[15] At the same time, he calls his opponent a fool outright several times, first for drinking off Maron's wine so greedily (ix.361) and then again for failing to detect the men tied underneath his animals (ix.442–3), and lays tremendous stress on his own cleverness in the encounter (ix.281–2, 316–8, 413–4, 419–24), going so far as to claim that the ram which carried him out of the monster's cave moved with dangerous slowness because it was burdened down with 'me and my close thoughts' (ἐμοὶ πυκινὰ φρονέοντι ix.444–5).

Part of Odysseus' purpose here is thus to present a story of his own civilized human cleverness winning out over Polyphemos' brutish folly, and so to lay claim once more and quite emphatically to the image of the master of δόλοι he has fostered for himself on Scheria (esp. viii.494–5) and with which he in fact introduces his apology (ix.19–20). If he and the majority of his men ultimately escaped the Kyklops' cave, the obvious implication is, the credit must all go to him.[16] Indeed, Odysseus is at pains throughout this story to show he did everything possible to protect and save his shipmates and took all the greatest risks himself. It was he who spoke up when Polyphemos

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[14] Were it not for Odysseus' introductory remarks characterizing the Kyklopes in a negative fashion (cf. Race [1993] 105–6), one might easily conclude these creatures lived in a pastoral paradise, relying on the generosity of the gods to furnish them with all good things (ix.107–11) and free to govern their personal affairs without interference (ix.112–5). Fortunately for the hero, his hosts have a long history of bad blood with these creatures (vi.4–6) and are thus presumably predisposed to take his criticisms of them at face-value. Mondi (1983), esp. 23–5, 31, suggests that ix.107–15 preserves "a singular and precious vestige" of a pre-Homeric poetic tradition in which the Kyklopes were rewarded with a life of blessedness in return for their assistance to Zeus in the Titanomachy (cf. Hes. *Th.* 139–41; cf. 501–6), but nothing in the language or grammar of the passage suggests it is anything other than a free-floating formular description of a Golden Age existence.

[15] On the contrast with the hypercivilized Phaeacians implicit here, see Segal (1962) 33; Clay (1980) 263–4; Mondi (1983) 26–8. In fact, ix.291 rather implies Polyphemos has a knife, and ix.319–21 clearly suggests he has an axe.

[16] *Pace* Scully (1987) 402–3, who argues that Odysseus presents himself as having been genuinely careless with his men here.

spotted them and asked a general question about their identity (esp. ix.251–62), for example, and he who thought of turning the crude length of olive wood he found lying in the cave into a weapon (esp. ix.316–20). It was also he who took charge of all the vital steps in the operation, sharpening the point of the beam while his comrades merely smoothed down its sides (ix.325–8), firing it to make it hard (ix.328) and hiding it in the sheep-dung lying all around (ix.329–30).[17] So too he was the one who placed the beam in the fire a second time that night to grow hot (ix.375–6) and encouraged the others, knowing they might otherwise abandon the task in terror (ix.376–7), and he who took the decisive role in driving the stake into the Kyklops' eye (ix.383–4). He also invented the plan to escape the monster once it had been blinded (esp. ix.420–4), binding animals together and tying the other men beneath them (ix.427–31) but saving himself in a different and far more difficult way, clinging throughout the night by the strength of his hands alone to the belly of the ram who was naturally 'by far the best of all the sheep' (ix.431–5). In the end, he was also the last man to escape (ix.444–5) and the one in greatest danger, since the blinded Polyphemos stopped and stroked the animal beneath which he was suspended (ix.446), puzzling out loud over why it was moving so slowly (ix.447–52) and cursing his enemy Οὖτις in the bloodiest terms possible as he did so (esp. ix.458–60).[18] Once out of the cave, finally, it was Odysseus who freed the others from their bonds (ix.463) and got the crew as a whole away to safety (ix.468–72).

One basic point of this story is thus that Odysseus saved himself and his comrades from the brutish and uncivilized Polyphemos by means of his famous treachery and cleverness (esp. ix.408, 413–4). It was also his decisions which got them into trouble in the first place (ix.171–8, 224–30), however, and that fact has a decisive further influence on the character and content of his narrative. In part, this is merely a matter of shifting blame. Throughout the tale of his encounter with the Kyklops, Odysseus presents himself as a man who

[17] This final detail may be intended in part as a further indication of Polyphemos' savage and uncivilized nature; contrast the manure piled carefully outside the door of Odysseus' palace for use as agricultural fertilizer (xvii.297–9; contrast ix.107–11).

[18] On this passage, see Newton (1983), who stresses the odd reversal of sympathy felt as the monster is transformed for a moment into the victim of a bitter fate. Whatever pity the Kyklops' words evoke is quickly dispelled, however, by his horrible description of the vengeance he would like to take on Odysseus.

honors the Olympians and who accordingly believes in and supports the conventions of ξενίη.[19] He explains his initial impulse to leave the safety of Goat Island as driven by an Alkinoos-like desire (cf. viii.575–6) to find out whether these new people honored strangers and the gods (ix.174–6), for example, and pauses in his story on the way up to Polyphemos' cave to tell how he and his men spared Apollo's priest when they sacked the city of the Kikonians and were given gifts in return (ix.197–205).[20] So too the specific reason he supplies for his fateful decision to wait to meet Polyphemos face-to-face is the hope of getting ξείνια from him (ix.229), and he says he capped his initial appeal to the monster for mercy with an insistence on his rights as a guest and suppliant and on the claims of the gods in general and Ζεὺς ξείνιος in particular (ix.266–71). The lawless, reckless, savage (cf. ix.106, 189, 215) Kyklops, on the other hand, declared at once that he cared nothing for the Olympians who had given him so many good things (ix.273–8; cf. ix.107–11), and went on to prove this by preparing two of his visitors for dinner (ix.288–91), an action whose utterly uncivilized character Odysseus underlines by comparing him to a mountain-bred lion (ix.292–3). Odysseus also says he chided his enemy for his shortsighted neglect of hospitality as he got him drunk (ix.349–52), but received in reply only another brutal and disgusting parody of decent behavior: his guest-gift would be to be eaten last of his companions (ix.369–70). As a result, the hero declared himself the vengeance of Zeus incarnate as he sailed away, and insisted he had acted specifically in defence of the rights of ξενίη (ix.477–9). His story falls apart at once under hostile scrutiny, of course, for he and his men consistently played the part not of guests but of pirates or burglars (esp. ix.216–8, 224–7, 231–2), and if they were foolish enough to wait for the master of the house they had invaded to return, one might easily argue, they deserved whatever punishment they got.[21] Much more important than reading so aggressively against the text, however, is recognizing the point Odysseus wishes to make: although he did miscalculate by staying in the cave (ix.228–30), it was only because he failed to realize that

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[19] On the theme of guest-friendship in this story and elsewhere in Books ix–xii, see Podlecki (1961); Delasanta (1967) 53–6; Most (1989); Reece (1993) 123–43.

[20] For Goat Island, see Clay (1980), with the response of Bremmer (1986).

[21] On another level, therefore, the confrontation with Polyphemos sets up parallels with the situation on Ithaca and thus prepares the emotional and moral ground for Odysseus' murder of the Suitors; cf. Newton (1983).

anyone could be as outrageous and impious as Polyphemos, who is the person genuinely at fault for everything which happened and thus for the death of the six men.[22] At the same time, the issue of guest-gifts serves to highlight the social divisions which existed between Odysseus and his crew and ultimately brought disaster upon them.

Although Odysseus could not force the other Ithacan sailors to do his will when they opposed him as a group (cf. ix.43–6), they did offer him a reasonable amount of obedience so long as he did not attempt to push them too far (esp. ix.88–91, 98–104). They also showed him respect in other, more concrete and quantifiable ways. When nine animals were allotted to each ship after the successful hunting on Goat Island, for example, ten were given him alone (ix.159–60), and when the Kyklops' herds were split up 'equally' among the crews, he received the ram which carried him out of the cave as an extra portion (ix.548–51).[23] These are all presented as collective decisions on the part of the other men (ἔξελον ix.160; ἐυκνήμιδες ἑταῖροι/... δόσαν ix.550–1) and appear designed to mark and affirm Odysseus' superior status among them. Maron behaved in a similar way, giving seven talents of gold, a krater of silver and twelve amphorae of wine to Odysseus individually (ix.201–5; n.b. μοι 197, 201, 202, 203), despite the fact that it was the Ithacan warriors as a group who spared and honored him (ix.199–200); Odysseus was their leader and this was thus his natural due. These very different social expectations are at the root of the division of opinion which followed immediately upon the arrival in the land of the Kyklopes. When Odysseus and his men first came up to Polyphemos' cave, the others were for taking some of the cheese they found there back to their boat, returning for the lambs and kids and then fleeing to the island whence they had set out (ix.224–7). They could expect nothing more from the owner of this house than they had received from Maron, after all, and were accordingly predisposed to loot and run. Odysseus, on the other hand, thought he could get himself another guest-gift

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[22] That Odysseus took provisions with him in the expectation that the Kyklops would prove undercivilized (ix.212–5) means only that he was prepared for rudeness; cannibalism is a very different matter.

[23] For this extra share of booty (γέρας), cf. vii.9–11; xi.533–4. That the Kikonian women and other goods were divided up 'so that no-one might go cheated of his due share' (ix.41–2), therefore, does not mean that everything was divided into equal portions, but that everyone got 'what he deserved.'

(ix.228–9; n.b. μοι) and somehow prevailed upon his companions to remain in the cave with him (ix.231–3). That this was a bad decision only became clear in retrospect; at the moment, an easy meal was in reach (ix.231–2) and no obvious danger threatened, and they accordingly allowed themselves to be persuaded. So too near the end of the story, when Odysseus turned about to shout at Polyphemos, his men, interested only in escape, tried to restrain him (ix.494–9). He was eager to claim the honor likely to be associated with the blinding of the monster's eye, however, and refused to be dissuaded (ix.500; cf. ix.228).[24] In this case, no-one was injured as a direct result of his decision (ix.482–3, 539–40) and he accordingly expresses no regret for it (contrast ix.228–30).[25] All the same, the same stark division of personal interests is apparent here as at the beginning of the story: unlike his men, Odysseus had an interest in and expectation of receiving specifically heroic goods such as κλέος and ξείνια, and conflicts inevitably arose when his needs and concerns came into conflict with theirs. He had no desire to bring ruin upon them, and if he somehow accidentally got them into trouble by pursuing his own interests, he did his best to get them out again and bitterly regretted whatever damage was the result.[26] Had they simply stood by him through thick and thin and trusted in his leadership, the great majority of them might have made their way back home alive in the end. Instead, they gave in once more to folly, ignored their proper place in the world and precipitated the tragedy which followed the visit to Aiolia (x.1–76).

When Odysseus and his men arrived on Aiolos' island, he reports, he alone was treated as a φίλος by the king and engaged by him in conversation (x.14–6), and it was to him that the bag of winds intended to ensure the safe homecoming of the group as a whole was entrusted (x.19–24).[27] Odysseus was obviously acting with the com-

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[24] On the significance of Odysseus' surrender of his name and the use to which Polyphemos puts it, cf. Peradotto (1990) 140–1. On the hero's consistent concern for his own self-interest, contrast Friedrich (1987).

[25] Note in this connection that, at least in the way Odysseus tells the story, his men ceased to complain about his behavior once out of Polyphemos' range and actually awarded him a prize of honor upon their return to Goat Island (ix.550–1).

[26] Note that Odysseus waited to shout the first time until his boat was as far away as his voice could carry (ix.473–4) and then (somewhat illogically) on the second occasion until it was out two times that far (ix.491–2). These are not the actions of a man deliberately courting disaster.

[27] For Aiolia and Scheria, see Clay (1985). It must be primarily his own νόστος

mon good in mind when he asked Aiolos for transport back to Ithaca (x.17–8), and even stayed awake for nine full days and nights on end holding the sheet in order that he and his comrades might get home as quickly as possible (x.28, 32–3). When he briefly fell asleep with land in sight, leaving the others to their own devices (x.29–31), disaster struck. The men had noticed the special treatment Odysseus received wherever they visited (ix.196–205; x.14–6; cf. ix.355–70) and now declared they had come to resent it (x.38–9). They also expressed disgust at returning home from war with 'empty hands' while he was bringing back 'many lovely stores of plunder' (x.40–2), and accordingly interpreted the visit to Aiolos as only the latest example of a galling general pattern: once again their leader had been treated with φιλότης and allowed to add to his reputation and (apparently) his personal wealth (cf. ix.196–205, 502–5), and once again they had been ignored. Odysseus himself ultimately takes some blame for what happened next, speaking of 'our (collective) folly' (αὐτῶν . . . ἀπωλόμεθ' ἀφραδίῃσιν x.27; ἡμετέρῃ ματίῃ x.79) and not just of mistakes made by his crew. His implication is not that he erred in failing to tell them why the sack was not to be opened, however, and it is not obvious that he would have been able to restrain them in any case (cf. ix.43–6). Instead, his point is simply that he should not have fallen asleep (x.31), for by allowing his companions to escape his supervision for even a brief period of time he contributed to their ruin, in that they could now do things they would not otherwise have dared and which he would never have allowed.[28] Eager to know exactly how much gold and silver he had got from Aiolos (x.35–6, 43–5) and unrestrained by his usual active oversight of their affairs, the men opened up the bag (x.46–7). There was literally nothing inside it except the guarantee of their safe homecoming (cf. x.19–24), and had they simply left well enough alone, they would have been back in their fatherland very shortly (x.29–30). By growing resentful of their leader and prying ignorantly into his affairs, however, they ruined themselves and him as well (x.47–55; cf. x.78–

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which Odysseus reports on here, although he certainly knows of the various quarrels, divisions and false starts following the fall of the city which Nestor describes at iii.130–64.

[28] At the same time, identification of this as a 'mistake' serves in an backhanded way to emphasize Odysseus' heroic powers of endurance in staying awake longer than any ordinary man could have.

9), and nothing he could do thereafter to remedy the situation was of any use (x.59–77).

This unfortunate tendency on the part of the companions to ignore Odysseus' natural social superiority over them and the disastrous consequences of this tendency came to a sad initial climax in the visit to Telepyle (x.81–132). Odysseus remained sufficiently in command of his forces here to be able to select and send out three men to reconnoiter the countryside (x.100–2), just as he had done in the land of the Lotos-Eaters (ix.88–90). Although he chose to anchor his own ship outside the harbor, however, the other eleven crews ignored his lead and opted instead for the apparent calm and safety within (x.91–6). As a result, they were destroyed in a brutal and disgusting fashion (x.118–24), and only the men who were with Odysseus escaped and even then only because they responded immediately to his order to flee (x.128–32). With this disaster, the first phase of the Wanderings comes to an end. The relationship between Odysseus and his men was tense and difficult from the first, and he did accidentally send a few of them to their deaths (ix.288–91, 311, 344; x.100–16). All the same, he did the best he could for them and the stories he tells repeatedly reveal that to reject his leadership was to choose to die (esp. ix.59–61; x.121–5), just as to question the prerogatives his position brought him and thus the extent of his concern for his comrades was to risk losing one's homecoming, which amounts to the same thing (x.34–49). From this point on, the Wanderings take on a slightly different character and explore a separate but closely related set of issues. Odysseus has already hinted that the men in his ship were not entirely interchangeable by saying he chose the twelve best of them to accompany him on his visit to the Kyklops' cave (ix.195) and by adding that it was to the four he would have preferred that the lot fell on the next day to assist him in blinding the monster (ix.334). Only now, however, after a twelve-fold reduction in the overall number of sailors, do particular individuals within the crew emerge with any clarity: Polites was 'the dearest and most devoted of my companions' (x.224–5); Perimedes seems to have been particularly reliable as well (xi.23–4; xii.195–6); Elpenor was weak and something of a fool (x.552–3); Eurylochos was important and influential (x.203–5; xi.23–4; xii.195–6) but increasingly insubordinate (esp. x.429–37; xii.278–94, 339–52). At the same time, the focus of the stories shifts to the problem, already raised obliquely in the tale of Aiolos and the sack of winds, of how much a commander can

and should tell his men of what he knows about their future and of what happens when they fail to follow his orders without question when he withholds such information from them.

After the ship came to land on Aiaia (x.135), Odysseus reports, it was he who put an end to two days of general exhausted mourning (x.142–3), by taking the independent initiative to spy out the countryside (x.145–7) rather than send out some of the others, as had been his practice before (ix.88–90; x.100–2). Indeed, he might actually have gone off alone to find the source of the smoke he saw in the distance (x.149–50), he declares, but decided (in another typically precise flash of intuition) that it would be 'more profitable' (κέρδιον) to give dinner to his crew and send them out instead (x.151–5).[29] When on the next day their lack of enthusiasm for the mission became apparent (x.198–201), he abandoned this plan as well and divided the men into two groups of equal size, assigning one to himself and the other to Eurylochos, and called for lots to be cast between them (x.203–6). Although he was among those initially left behind on the beach, therefore, this was a simple matter of chance (x.207–9), for he willingly accepted an equal share of the risk and had even considered carrying out the project alone.

Eurylochos was Odysseus' close relative (x.441) and thus, like him, qualified by birth to be a leader of men (x.205). He was also no fool, as he showed by suspecting from the first that Kirke's invitation was a trap and refusing to follow his comrades into her house (x.232). That he failed to keep them from acting foolishly does not necessarily reflect badly upon him (cf. ix.43–6). His behavior when he returned to the ship alone later in the day, on the other hand, was patently disgraceful. As soon as Odysseus heard what had happened to the first half of his crew, he armed himself with a sword and bow and asked to be taken back to them (x.261–3). Eurylochos refused, begging desperately to be excused, and actually suggested that they leave the other men to their fate and flee (x.264–9). Horrified panic (esp. x.246–8) was perhaps on some level an appropriate reaction to what he had seen, and his assessment of the likelihood that his kinsman would be able to return safe and unassisted to the ship with his comrades was in fact entirely accurate (x.267–8; cf. x.284–5). Odysseus

[29] For Odysseus' hunting at x.156–71 in light of myths of the Actaeon type, see Roessel (1989), with the response of Birge (1993) 19–22. On Odysseus' self-presentation here, cf. Schmoll (1987); on the mythic and storytelling background to the tale, see Alexander (1991).

nonetheless chose to head off alone into the interior to face the danger, whatever it might be, remarking by way of explanation only that 'harsh necessity is on me' (x.273–4). He could not abandon his men, and as a result, he insists, even after he had slept with Kirke and was being entertained in her halls (x.346–73) he remained unable to eat or drink until he had them with him (x.373–87; contrast x.271–3). Eurylochos, on the other hand, opposed him to his face when he came down to the beach to fetch the second half of the crew back to the house, reminding them of what had happened in the Kyklops' cave and insisting that just as the 'blind folly' (ἀτασθαλίῃσιν) of the 'rash Odysseus' destroyed some of their comrades there, so it would destroy them now (x.429–37). This very aggressive piece of storytelling amounted to a direct challenge to Odysseus' authority and the hero says he accordingly toyed with killing Eurylochos on the spot (x.438–41). Rather than letting that happen, the other men put the dissenter safely out of the way, affirmed (at least for the moment) their submission to Odysseus' authority (εἰ σὺ κελεύεις; ἡμῖν δ' ἡγεμόνευ') and followed him off to the house (x.441–6). Indeed, even Eurylochos straggled along in the rear, afraid of what might otherwise be said to and about him later (x.447–8). His initial bid for power had failed and the real quality of his leadership should have been apparent (x.268–9). By safeguarding his life even as they declared their allegiance to Odysseus, however, the other members of the crew protected the political and social alternatives he represented. Had they known what would eventually come of this, they might have handled the situation somewhat differently.

Precisely what went on between Odysseus and his men on Kirke's island is never made clear. As the hero initially presents the tale, the others shared with him in a year-long round of feasts and then made a sudden request to depart (x.469–74), which he granted the moment he heard it (x.475). In his account of his conversation with Kirke that evening, on the other hand, he suggests that there was actually a quiet struggle for a long time over when they would leave Aiaia (x.485–6) and that only after the crew confronted him privately (μ' ἐκκαλέσαντες x.471–4) and were about to go into open revolt did he act to satisfy their demands. What is more important is that from this point on Odysseus managed his men and their affairs in a consistent and aggressive fashion. Unlike Kalypso, Kirke offered no overt resistance to being abandoned by her mortal lover, but merely announced that he and his men would have to go to Hades before

they could reach home (x.489–91).[30] This was heartbreaking (cf. x.496–8, 566–7) and extremely important news, but rather than sharing it with his companions at once, Odysseus simply told them they were leaving, just as they had requested (x.546–9; cf. x.472–4); only when they were ready to sail and the issue could not be avoided any longer did he inform them that their destination was the Underworld (x.562–5). This pattern, in which Odysseus knows in advance much of what is likely to happen to his men but declines to share his knowledge with them, is constantly in evidence throughout the final half of the Wanderings.[31] When the ship finally reached the Kimmerian coast, for example, he notes that the entire crew accompanied him to the spot Kirke had described (xi.20–2) and adds that Perimedes and Eurylochos actually assisted in the sacrifice (xi.23–4, 44–7). It was him alone the Dead addressed and seemed to see (e.g. xi.60, 92, 473, 617), however, and his panic which put an end to the visit (xi.633–5; cf. xi.43). So too the fact that he was later able to present Tiresias' prophecy about the hazards they would encounter to the other sailors as something of which they were unaware (xii.271–6; cf. xi.105–13) makes it clear that that interview, at least, was entirely private. Once they were back on Aiaia, moreover, Kirke congratulated the crew as a whole on their voyage and promised them detailed directions for the next stage in their journey (xii.20–7), but only after the others were asleep and she had for good measure drawn Odysseus apart (xii.32–3) did she offer specific advice about what was to come (xii.37–141). Even the song of the Sirens was reserved for Odysseus alone, with the other members of the crew required to plug their ears rather than to listen to it (xii.47–52, 166–200).[32] This difference between him and them and its political and social consequences are of decisive significance for the end of the Wanderings and indeed for the *Odyssey* as a whole.

Although he insisted the next morning that everyone in the crew should hear what Kirke had told him (xii.154–7), Odysseus actually

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[30] The parallel with what Kalypso tells Odysseus is nonetheless striking: to go back to Ithaca is to consent to die (esp. v.135–40, 203–10), and in each case the hero recognizes the significance of what he is told but accepts his fate nonetheless (v.215–24; x.496–502; cf. i.56–9). See also Scully (1987) 407; Crane (1988) 15–60.

[31] Cf. the related remarks of Scully (1987) 411–5.

[32] There are once again obvious echoes here of the situation on Aiaia: Odysseus alone is allowed to sleep with the goddess (x.347) = listen to the captivating words of the Sirens (xii.49–50; cf. i.56–7), and his men, free from this enchantment, force him to go home despite his inclinations (x.469–75; xii.192–6).

discussed only the Sirens with them (xii.158–65) and made no mention of what was to follow (cf. xii.55–110). This is quickly shown to have been a wise decision. As soon as the sound of the Clashing Rocks and the sight of mist and water leaping up from them became apparent, Odysseus reports, his men dropped their oars in panic and the ship began to drift (xii.203–5). Given that there was no longer any wind driving them forward (xii.168–9), the direction in which they headed would have to be a matter of deliberate choice (cf. xii.56–8) and organized, energetic action; were this to fail, general ruin would be the inevitable result (cf. xii.62–8). This was accordingly no time for a popular debate on possible courses of action, and Odysseus says he resorted instead to 'honeyed words' (xii.207), recalling the apparently even more threatening encounter with the Kyklops in as favorable terms as possible (xii.209–12; contrast x.435–7) and deliberately failing to mention Skylla (xii.213–25, esp. 223). Kirke had told him that the price of getting past this monster would be six random and horrible deaths (xii.98–100), but had argued this was better than losing the entire crew to Charybdis (xii.106–10), and Odysseus himself was sure the terror already apparent in his men would drive them under their rowing-benches if they understood the situation fully (xii.224–5). For their own good, therefore, he concealed the truth from them and so doomed some of them to die. He did attempt to protect them to the extent he could by putting himself at risk, arming and stepping forward without explanation to confront Skylla face-to-face (xii.226–31).[33] Nevertheless he failed, and he says the way the monster's victims called out to him as they were dragged up and strangled was the most awful thing he witnessed during all his wanderings (xii.245–59, esp. 258–9), even worse, apparently, than seeing Polyphemos' victims dashed against the ground 'like puppy dogs' and cut up limb from limb (ix.288–93, 311, 344) or watching hundreds of others crushed by stones and speared like fish in Telepyle (x.121–4). In this case, after all, he had made a deliberate decision to let some of his men die, and yet the victims still expected him to save them. That anyone at all got away here was a consequence of the fact that the crew could still be cajoled into something approaching obedience. When the ship drew near to Thrinakia toward evening

[33] As the embarrassment of the developmentalists Bradley (1976) 141, and Rutherford (1986) 152, on this point makes clear, Odysseus has apparently not learned to keep clear of such creatures from his encounter with Polyphemos.

(cf. xii.291), matters became considerably more difficult.[34]

The moment he heard the sound of cows and sheep coming from the island (xii.264–6), Odysseus reports, he realized where they were and told his men not to land, invoking prophecies he had received from Tiresias and Kirke to justify his orders without specifying exactly what he knew (xii.271–6). Had they only obeyed him now, they might have made their way back home alive (cf. xi.110–1; xii.137–8). Instead, the already once rebellious (x.429–37) but apparently rehabilitated and reconciled (xi.23–4; xii.195–6) Eurylochos, whom the crew had deliberately protected after his previous bid for power (x.438–45), spoke up again, attacking what he characterized as his kinsman's failure to appreciate the needs and limitations of his men and his lack of real concern for their welfare (xii.278–90; cf. x.429–34) and proposing an apparently much more reasonable course of action (xii.291–3). Eurylochos' failings as a leader should have been obvious from his willingness to abandon his comrades on Aiaia (esp. x.268–9), but this time the crew, hungry and exhausted from their long and terrible day (xii.283, 292), applauded his words (xii.294; contrast x.441–6). Isolated and facing another general revolt (n.b. xii.297; cf. ix.43–6; x.471–4), Odysseus had no choice but to give in, extracting in return for his consent to land an oath that the men would not eat any cattle or sheep they might encounter on the island (xii.298–302).[35] One could perhaps make the case that the Wanderings might have ended differently, had the hero taken this opportunity to tell his men everything he knew about the hazards which awaited them on Thrinakia. Indeed, even after contrary winds sprang up to keep them there (xii.313–5, 325–6), he only announced again that unspecified trouble would ensue if damage were done to the animals he now identified as belonging specifically to Helios (xii.320–3). To read so aggressively against the text is once again to risk missing the point of the story for its narrator, however, and Odysseus in fact expresses no retrospective regret for any of his decisions here (contrast ix.228, 230). His men had no need for further details from him, provided that they kept their word. Only when they were once again left to their own devices (xii.333–8; cf. x.31–46), therefore, did disaster occur, as Eurylochos spoke up for a third

[34] For events on Thrinakia, cf. Fenik (1974) 208–32, esp. 212–5; Friedrich (1987a) 389–93; and Chapter 10.

[35] For this oath as a means of saving face for Odysseus, see Friedrich (1987a) 396.

time, offering another seemingly reasonable but in fact thoroughly misguided plan (xii.340–52; cf. x.268–9, 431–4; xii.291–3). This time Odysseus was even less to blame for the actions of his crew than he was in the story of the bag of winds, for it was the gods, he says, who put him to sleep (xii.338; contrast x.31) and his comrades had been warned explicitly in advance about what they ought not to do (xii.320–3). That they used the opportunity afforded by his absence to adopt Eurylochos' proposals and slaughter the cattle of the Sun (xii.353–65) was thus entirely their own responsibility; despite his constant, devoted efforts on their behalf (esp. xii.333–7), he was unable to save them (cf. i.5–9). Not surprisingly, their rebellious group-solidarity did not last for long. As soon as Odysseus returned to the ship, they began to quarrel and blame one another for what had happened (xii.391–2), doing their best not to be held individually responsible by him for what was obviously a reckless collective decision. All the same, the damage had been done (xii.392–3), and as soon as they put to sea Zeus destroyed them all (xii.403–19), leaving only Odysseus to be carried by the wind and waves to Ogygia (xii.420–53).

The Wanderings thus describe a series of political rather than personal developments, as Odysseus' relationship with his men slowly deteriorates and they bring about their own ruin. He did not fail his companions, he insists, and is not responsible for what happened to them; indeed, he did everything he could to save them and risked his own life over and over again in their defense. Instead, it was they who failed him by rejecting his advice and authority, thus bringing trouble upon themselves and their leader as well. When they refused to listen to him on the Ismaran beach and chose instead to feast on the wine and animals they had captured there (ix.43–6), their enemies rallied and routed them, killing six men out of every ship (ix.47–61); when they grew resentful of the warm reception and gifts Aiolos and others gave him and opened up the bag of winds (x.34–46), they were blown decisively away from their homeland (x.47–9); when eleven ships entered the harbor at Telepyle rather than anchoring outside with him (x.91–6), they were all destroyed (x.121–5); when the survivors of this first great disaster ignored his pleas and their oath as well and slaughtered the cattle of the Sun (xii.340–65), they signed their own death-warrant (xii.403–19). He was not always right and his errors cost some of his men their lives (esp. ix.224–30). In addition, he was forced from time to time to allow certain individu-

als to be put at risk or even to die for the common good (esp. xii.223–5).[36] In every case, however, he rescued as many of his comrades as he could, and never asked them to face a danger he was not willing to confront at least as aggressively himself (esp. ix.331–3; x.203–6, 273–4; xii.226–31). The political arrangement all this represents is not a particularly democratic one, but it could not have been, for the crew were generally incapable of saving themselves or making the hard decisions necessary from time to time if they were ever to return home. Instead, they had a leader whose duty it was to act in their best interest as well as his own, neither pandering to them nor allowing them to know more than they needed or was good for them at any particular point in time. Regardless of appearances, his decisions were always made with their good in mind or at least with the intention of doing them no harm. On occasion he was wrong or ill-informed or even momentarily reckless, but then his men were free to offer him their comments or to voice their concerns. In general, however, to submit oneself to him by mastering one's appetites in even the most tempting or difficult circumstances (esp. ix.43–4; xii.329–32), or by obeying him although his orders appeared outrageous and his motives were unclear (esp. xii.271–6) was to choose life and homecoming. To reject his commands and give in to the demands of one's belly (ix.44–6; xii.340–65)[37] or to resentment against the undeniable privileges his position brought him (x.34–46), or to second-guess his judgment and search for an apparently more accommodating commander (esp. xii.278–94), on the other hand, was to opt for disaster and death. That is what the comrades did over and over again, and in the end their foolishness ruined them and Odysseus as well. That he is now impoverished and alone ought therefore not to be held against him; the truth of the situation is in his story rather than in what seems to meet the eye. Homer as well, of course, is concerned to insist that his Odysseus did not return from his wanderings with the blood of his companions on his hands (i.5–9), and in this sense his purposes intersect neatly here with those of his hero. At the same

[36] Note how the single death on Aiaia is presented as entirely the fault of the victim (x.552–60; cf. xi.61–5). Indeed, Odysseus' tendency to tell all these stories in a manner which reflects well on himself is nowhere more apparent than in the fact that in Book x he ignores what one would otherwise take to be his embarrassing failure to bury Elpenor immediately (cf. xi.53–4) and then in Book xi actually converts this into an example of his profound concern for his followers (esp. xi.55, 80).

[37] For the reckless, shameless belly and its ability to drive men to act as they otherwise would not, cf. vii.216–8; xvii.286–9, 473–4; xviii.53–4.

time, the poet uses the tale told in Books ix–xii for more substantial purposes, preparing his own auditors for what is to come on Ithaca while offering a powerful initial comment on the question of how men behave (or misbehave) in groups and how they must be handled as a consequence.[38]

Odysseus has been gone from his native island for close to twenty years, leaving the other Ithacans free to act as they will. A few continue to respect his authority and keep in mind the possibility of his return and all that might involve (esp. ii.163–9, 235–8). The majority do not (esp. ii.233–4), however, and instead allow their young men to run wild, slaughtering the absent king's animals and drinking his wine (e.g. ii.55–8), foolishly convinced they will never have to account for their behavior (e.g. ii.182–3, 246–51). As the stories of the Wanderings make clear, personal and political recklessness of this sort leads directly and inevitably to disaster (esp. ix.43–61), and the fact that the king is temporarily absent from his land is very much beside the point. He will come back soon enough to interrupt the feasting (esp. xii.368–73; cf. xx.390–4; xxii.8–21), and then there will be no time or use for excuses (xii.391–3; cf. xxii.45–67). Indeed, Odysseus eventually likens the Suitors specifically to a group of men with whom he once sailed and who, he says, brought about their own ruin by their outrageous and incautious actions (xvii.425–41; cf. xxiv.426–9).[39] The punishments dealt out to the Suitors and their families at the end of the poem thus pick up themes already established in the first half of the Wanderings and illustrate again and even more emphatically the danger of ignoring a legitimate leader's authority, regardless of how safe or appealing revolt might seem to be. The behavior of the much more finely-drawn characters within Odysseus' house, on the other hand, reflects the concerns of the similarly individualized second half of the tale offered the Phaeacians, by dwelling on the need for obedience to one's natural social superiors even when one is not sure what they are up to or why. The precise and careful loyalty of Odysseus' wife, son and servants, even to commands almost two decades old and some of which now appear contrary to their own best interests (xviii.257–73; xx.209–23), after all, is vital not only to his success but to their own as well, while even the apparently most insignificant or well-intentioned acts of disobedience

[38] For these connections, cf. Louden (1993).

[39] For these connections, see also Friedrich (1987a) 389–93.

have the potential to bring about disaster (xxi.359–67; cf. xix.476–86). If Odysseus succeeds in his return home, his friends and followers will remain there as well (esp. xxi.213–5); if he fails, they can expect nothing but agony and exile (esp. xix.571–2). Despite that fact, not one of his allies is allowed to know all his mind: Eumaios is kept in absolute ignorance of his lord's return until the last possible moment, as is Philoitios; Eurykleia is first brutally silenced when she learns too much (xix.467–90), and then locked away without explanation in the women's quarters before the fight in the central hall begins (xxi.380–7); Telemachos knows the Stranger's identity but not the most important aspects of his plan (esp. xx.385–6); Penelope is allowed no hint that her husband has come home until he has killed the Suitors (esp. xix.203–12). The plan as a whole thus remains with Odysseus, or perhaps with Athena and the poet, and it is not the part of anyone else to know more than he or she must. Because the obedience of these subsidiary characters is automatic and unquestioning, as that of the crew was not, all their dearest and seemingly most unlikely desires are accomplished; that they were kept ignorant and in despair was somehow entirely for their own good. So too on a more general level, Homer's story insists that despite occasional appearances to the contrary and some inevitable miscalculations, i.e. despite what would otherwise seem to be the case, traditional aristocratic leaders are (or at least once were) intensely devoted to the welfare of their subordinates (e.g. ii.233–4). Common men, on the other hand, routinely make what prove in the end to be the wrong decisions, i.e. decisions which seem perfectly sensible at the moment but run contrary to the desires of those who normally wield power over them, and miscalculate their own best interest when they try to think for themselves. This is a difficult and dangerous world, it seems, where answers are rarely easy or apparent, the pressure to surrender to what is at least allegedly wrong is almost overpowering, and the knowledge which might help make better sense of things is not widely available. Not everyone can be saved in any case. All the same, the *Odyssey* and its hero are at pains to argue that the best course of action is still to accept the guidance of those who ought by right to rule, provided that they can be found. Failing that, one is left to wait, listening to tales and hoping to learn something of value from them, which is not a particularly satisfactory solution but often the only one available. The implications of that fact are particularly apparent in Homer's treatment of the story of Telemachos, to which I turn my attention now.

CHAPTER FOUR

TELEMACHOS AND THE ΚΛΕΟΣ OF ODYSSEUS

Immediately after the divine Assembly with which the story of the *Odyssey* begins, Athena descends to Ithaca, meets Telemachos there, and sends him off on an expedition to Pylos and Sparta (i.88–iv.624).[1] What follows is endless 'talk' of the sort typical of the Homeric world, much of it tales of Odysseus which the boy and his interlocutors use to wrestle with the question of what he can and ought to do in response to the increasingly desperate situation in his house. My most straightforward purpose in this chapter is to trace how Homer's characters use these stories and to ask how the poet constructs his own larger narrative around them. My deeper and more pressing concern is to argue that this portion of the *Odyssey* raises a series of questions, fundamental to the epic as a whole, about the human condition and the power (or lack of power) of storytelling to confront and overcome it. Most contemporary critics insist Telemachos develops in the course of Book i–iv. In fact, he does not, in part because he is already who and what he needs to be, but also because his utter inadequacy for the task which has been set him transforms him into a model auditor of tales like this one. Very much like Homer's external audience, he is trapped from the first between the exemplary κλέος of his father and who he knows (or thinks) he himself is, and stranded in an imperfect and apparently pointless world which seems incapable of being restored to how it once supposedly was. The most significant irony of the *Odyssey* is that Telemachos is wrong in his assessment of himself and of the situation he confronts, for the gods intervene repeatedly and decisively in his favor and Odysseus ultimately returns to Ithaca and takes revenge upon his enemies. That fact in turn requires that we rethink our own reaction to Homer's

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[1] The most useful discussion of Telemachos and his situation in Books i–iv remains Allione (1963) 9–27. Other significant work on the topic includes: Jaeger (1939) 27–30; Millar and Carmichael (1954); Clarke (1963); Eckert (1963); Rose (1967); Austin (1969); Thornton (1970) 68–77; Apthorp (1980); Murnaghan (1987) 33–8; Jones (1988); Lateiner (1992) 140–4. Krischer (1988) and Jones (1992) discuss the Telemacheia in terms of Homer's larger narrative intentions; Alden (1987) attempts to place it in its folktale context.

story and to the possibilities and problems which it poses.

Clarke, Austin and others have all stressed Telemachos' initial dreaminess and immaturity and his desperate need for an initiation into male society and contact with anyone other than the Suitors and his mother.[2] Although the boy is indeed daydreaming as his story begins (i.114–7), however, he is scarcely as distracted and trapped in a world of fantasy as he is sometimes made out to be.[3] Indeed, Homer says he was 'by far the first' (πολὺ πρῶτος) to spy the stranger standing outside his door (i.113), which implies he is considerably more firmly attached to reality than are the other young men gathered in his halls.[4] Once he becomes aware of the situation, moreover, he immediately gets up, brings the visitor in and seats him in a place he chooses apart from the Suitors, both in order that he will not be offended by their behavior and so that no-one can eavesdrop on the conversation he intends to have with him about his missing father (i.119–35). As the boy denounces his enemies to his new guest, therefore, he leans up close to him 'in order that the others might not hear' (i.157).

Telemachos is thus by no means a guileless or ineffective character as his story begins. Instead, he is shrewd, discreet and well aware of what is going on around him.[5] He also knows quite well what constitutes proper behavior in Achaian society, as he shows by worrying about the possibility of public condemnation (νέμεσις) when he realizes a stranger has been left standing outside his door (i.119–20), by expressing reluctance to criticize the Suitors to his visitor, despite their horrible behavior (i.158–60), and by carrying out all the proper rituals of hospitality for him, greeting him in a friendly fashion (i.123), leading him in (i.125), providing him with a seat and a meal without asking his name (i.130–2, 136–43), and finally offering him a bath and a guest-present 'such as loving hosts give their visitors' before he

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[2] Millar and Carmichael (1954) 58–9; Clarke (1963) 130–5; Austin (1969) 52–7. Eckert (1963) treats Telemachos' story as a tale of ritual entrance into manhood, but there is no firm evidence for initiation of this sort in Greece in the late Dark Ages and the fit Eckert offers between other such rituals and Homer's tale is not particularly tight.

[3] Esp. Millar and Carmichael (1954) 58; Clarke (1963) 130.

[4] For the Suitors' general obtuseness, cf. Allione (1963) 17–22. Note also their complete lack of understanding as to what the abrupt departure of Telemachos' guest might mean and the apparent lack of curiosity which lets them fail to pursue the point (i.405–22).

[5] *Pace* Austin (1969), esp. 52–6.

[6] On Homeric hospitality, see Arend (1933) 34–53; Reece (1993) 5–39. Arend 40

departs (i.309–13; cf. i.123–4).[6] The extent of Telemachos' need for instruction in 'proper manners,' and thus the degree of isolation he has endured during Odysseus' absence, ought therefore not to be overestimated.[7] The Suitors have been in his house for several years at most (esp. ii.89–90), after all, and before that he spent a great deal of time with Eumaios (cf. xvi.27–9), whose manners are of the best.[8] In addition, Antikleia says that up until the time she died the boy was feasted constantly by the other Ithacans (xi.184–7) and thus presumably exposed to decent behavior on a regular basis.[9] Nor (once again despite Austin's protests to the contrary) does it require Athena's intervention to make Telemachos realize that the Suitors are taking advantage of him and that he should resent their depredations. In fact, he is full of anger from the very start and fascinated by the idea of vengeance (esp. i.114–7, 159–65), and what he lacks is not a sense of indignation, but a plan to save himself and his household and the sort of personal drive and confidence which would make acting upon his feelings possible (cf. i.88–92). For the moment, he sees himself as a victim (esp. i.244), outnumbered and outmatched by his enemies (i.245–8), and he accordingly sits passively among them, imagining their destruction (i.115–7, 163–5) but doing nothing to bring it about. Had Odysseus died at Troy or somewhere on the way home, he insists to 'Mentes,' the situation would not be so bad (i.236–40), in large part because he could then assume control of the house himself (cf. i.396–8) and require Penelope to remarry, bringing the destruction of his estate to a halt (cf. xx.326–37). Were his father to return, on the other hand, either satisfaction could be extracted from the Suitors for the goods they have consumed or they could be driven

(cf. 35), followed by Edwards (1975) 62; Race (1993) 80–3; and Reece 47–57, treats Telemachos' behavior as virtually ideal; cf. Allione (1963) 10; Scott (1971).

[7] Cf. Allione (1963) 15. This tendency is particularly apparent in Clarke (1963), esp. 133–5.

[8] On Eumaios' hospitality, see Chapter 6.

[9] Antikleia's death presumably predates the courtship of Penelope, both because she fails to tell Odysseus about it in the Underworld (esp. xi.181–3; cf. xi.223–4) and because Penelope can treat the task of weaving Laertes' burial-shroud as self-evidently her own concern (esp. ii.94–102).

[10] The most straightforward and coherent discussions of Penelope's status in Odysseus' house remain Combellack (1956) and Allione (1963) 30–3. Penelope clearly enjoys the same right later Greek women did to leave her husband's house of her own accord and take her dowry with her; cf. Foxhall (1989), and note Telemachos' awareness that he will be forced to pay Ikarios her dowry back if he drives her out of the house unwilling (ii.132–3). To remarry and thus put a stop to the destruction of Telemachos' estate, however, would require that she brave the public censure

violently out of the house (cf. i.115–7; ii.58–9).[10] As it is, however, his father has simply vanished into thin air (i.219, 235–6, 241–2) and the household as a whole is locked in an increasingly disastrous downward spiral. More animals are slaughtered and more wine drunk by the Suitors every day, his mother is paralyzed, and Telemachos expects he will himself be murdered sometime in the not too distant future (esp. i.245–51).

When Athena lands on Ithaca at i.103, therefore, Odysseus' son is in a difficult situation and can see no way out of it. The Suitors are lording it over the house (esp. i.225–9) and he sits among them, grieved and fuming, imagining their destruction and his father's return (i.115–7, 163–5) but apparently unable to conceive of the one happening without the other. This is precisely what Athena said about him when she announced her program on Ithaca to Zeus: he lacks a fighting spirit (μένος) and a plan for how to help himself, and that is what she will correct (i.88–94). She does so in large part by telling him stories of Odysseus.

Despite his physical absence from Ithaca, Odysseus is very much at the center of the action and the dialogue there in Book i. It is specifically at his door that Athena is said to alight (i.103), after all, and when Telemachos takes the spear from her hand, he places it in a rack where, the poet notes, 'stood many other spears of enduring-minded Odysseus' (i.128–9).[11] So too the boy himself is initially identified only as his father's son (i.88) and it is of him that he is thinking when Homer begins the story (i.115–7). When 'Mentes' has finished his meal and polite conversation is finally possible, moreover, Telemachos does not start off with the usual questions about who the stranger is and where he might be from. Instead, he first declares his disgust with his fellow-banqueters (i.159–60) and then proceeds directly to a discussion of his father's absence (i.161–8), appending to the normal verbal protocol of ξενίη which follows (i.169–76) a sad final reminiscence of how things were 'when he was current among men' (i.176–7). What defines Telemachos' vision of how things

which would accompany such a decision (xvi.273–5; xix.525–7; xxiii.148–51), and that is something she is as yet unwilling to do (i.249–50).

[11] There is clearly a certain symbolic value in this action, in that the weapon with which Athena masters 'ranks of heroes with whom she is angered' (i.100–1) passes into the arsenal of Odysseus (i.127–9), where it remains (cf. i.319–20); cf. Rose (1967) 397–8; Patzer (1991) 33. Note also the association of this spear with the 'great column' which physically supports the house (i.127).

'ought to be' and are not now, therefore, is principally a recollection of the days (which he himself never experienced; cf. xi.447–9) when Odysseus was in his house (i.176–7; cf. i.232–3), and that essentially fictional remembrance simultaneously informs his vision of a perfect and perhaps equally lost future, when all will be as it once was (i.115–7, 163–5). At the same time, Telemachos' image of his father's return is at least in part a symbol of what he would like to be himself, yet knows that he is not: a powerful man capable of ridding his house of his enemies and having honor and authority there (cf. ii.58–62). This would be a perfect conclusion to his story (cf. xxi.124–8), he understands, and yet it seems impossible, and he is accordingly trapped in despair (i.161–2, 166–8) and convinced that time is running out (esp. i.250–1). When he first speaks of Odysseus to his visitor, therefore, he presents the hero's story as one of loss and defeat, which explains all that is wrong with the world in which he himself is now forced to live (i.159–68).

Athena's ability to use the story of Odysseus for her own purposes has been in evidence from the very beginning of the poem, where she converts Zeus' denunciation of Aigisthos' 'typically mortal' folly and shortsightedness (i.32–43) into a contrast with Odysseus (i.46–62) who, she suggests, is deeply respectful of the gods but for some obscure reason the object of their anger and resentment (esp. i.60–2). As her father quickly points out, this is not an altogether fair or adequate portrait of the hero, who has in fact blinded Polyphemos and thus earned Poseidon's wrath (i.68–71, 74–5), and whose exile in the middle of the sea is accordingly not the result of simple negligence on his own part (i.64–7). Despite that fact, Zeus does agree to arrange for Odysseus' homecoming to Ithaca, and Athena's initial version of his tale thus sets the larger action of the poem underway (i.76–9). Here on Ithaca as well she responds to Telemachos' initial expressions of discouragement by offering a series of stories of the boy's father tailored expressly to her own immediate goals.

Athena knows precisely where Odysseus is and what the Olympians are doing to bring him home, and could therefore tell Telemachos all this, did she wish. Instead, she claims the boy's father is being held against his will on an island somewhere by men who are 'harsh' (χαλεποί) and 'savage' (ἄγριοι) (i.196–9), appending to this an insistence that he will nonetheless assuredly come home, 'since he is a man of many devices' (i.203–5). Part of this story is true (cf. i.49–50, 76–7) and there is a pronounced element of irony here, in that

Telemachos is promised what he longs for most (cf. i.115–7) but given no reason to believe in it, particularly since his guest expressly disclaims any skill at prophecy (i.202). Were this Athena's (or the poet's) only purpose with her speech, however, she might just as well have told the boy the whole truth about Kalypso, for whatever she says will seem equally credible (or incredible) to him and the practical difference between believing his father is held captive by cruel and uncivilized men and thinking he is with a sea-nymph would seem to be minimal. In fact, Athena's tale reflects her specific intentions with Telemachos and her assessment of his situation and potential.[12] Although Odysseus is not under the control of χαλεποὶ . . . ἄνδρες, after all, his son certainly is (e.g. i.227–9, 245–51), and his visitor's insistence that Odysseus' resourcefulness means he cannot be baffled by his enemies once he knows where he wants to go (i.205) can easily be read as an attempt not only to keep hope of his homecoming alive in Telemachos' heart (contrast i.161–2, 166–8), but also to encourage the boy to make his own way abroad (esp. i.93–5), despite what will prove to be the Suitors' efforts to impede him (ii.253–7; cf. ii.212–7). As if to underline the significance of these connections, in fact, Athena follows up her remarks by asking her interlocutor whether he is in fact Odysseus' son, remarking that, on a simple physical level at least, he looks uncannily like his father, whom she now characterizes as one of the best men who went off to Troy (i.206–11).

Athena thus uses the image of Telemachos' father quite deliberately here, and the boy shows he takes her meaning by offering an odd and cagey response to her final observation, admitting Penelope says he is Odysseus' child, but adding that no-one really knows the details of his own begetting (i.215–6) and declaring he would rather be the son of someone more fortunate than the man to whom, he now concedes, he is generally assigned (i.217–20). Telemachos has previously shown no reluctance to acknowledge his paternity (esp. i.175–7) and the grotesque idea that he intends a deliberate slight to his mother's honor is obviously to be rejected.[13] To admit to being the full-grown son of one of the best of the Achaian heroes (i.207–11), however, is to accept responsibility for behaving as one's father

[12] *Pace* Fenik (1974) 24, who declines to see any substantial significance in the goddess' remarks and is thus reduced to the non-explanation that 'having skirted too close to the truth [Athena] playfully veers away.'

[13] *Pace* Tracy (1990) 9.

would in a similar situation (cf. xxiv.508–12), and that is not something of which Telemachos yet feels capable (esp. ii.58–62). He accordingly declines to play the part which has been offered him, using an apparently proverbial remark about the general obscurity of paternity as a way of casting doubt on the relevance of Odysseus' story for his own (i.215–20).[14] In response, Athena insists again on the relevance of Telemachos' ancestry and the promise it holds out for the future (i.222–3) and offers a series of leading questions and remarks about the behavior of the Suitors in his house (i.225–9). When the boy's only reply is to present himself and his father yet again as hapless victims of cruel gods (esp. i.234–6, 244) and to make it clear he is simply waiting to be destroyed (i.251), she tells a second, considerably more pointed story, describing how Odysseus once visited Anchialos (cf. i.180) in search of poison for his arrows (i.257–64). This is (or might as well be) sheer fantasy again (cf. i.198–9), but what matters more is that Athena now imagines the hero's return in concrete terms which echo Telemachos' own fantasies (i.255–6, 265–6; cf. i.115–6, 163–5) and portrays him as a treacherous murderer of men (i.260–2). This is who Telemachos' father is (cf. i.208–9) and this, her implication is, is what he must become himself.[15] Indeed, she follows up her account of Odysseus' supposed journey after 'man-killing poison' with a long piece of advice (i.269–302), which culminates in the assertion that the final choice the boy will face will be precisely how to kill the Suitors (i.294–6).

As Page (following Kirchhoff and other analytic critics) has pointed out, this advice gives the initial impression of being immensely chaotic.[16] First Telemachos is told his mother ought to return to Ikarios' house to be married (i.275–8), although both he and Athena know she has no intention of doing so, but then a few lines later it is he who is to give her away, apparently for a second time (i.292). Even worse, once he has done all this, he is to attempt to kill the Suitors, although one of them will have become his step-father, while the others will presumably have scattered from the house (i.293–6;

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[14] For i.216 as a truism whose implications are not intended to be taken seriously, at least in one's own case, cf. West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad loc.

[15] Cf. Allione (1963) 12.

[16] Page (1955) 53–7, followed by Kirk (1962) 229–30. Vigorous responses to Page have been mounted by Combellack (1956), esp. 412–5; Allione (1963) 13–4 n. 6; and Lang (1969) 159–61. See also Belmont (1969) 111–4; Siegmann (1976).

cf. ii.127–8). "The text," Page concludes triumphantly, "is . . . both incoherent and self-contradictory," the product of "a hand which is relatively late and absolutely incompetent."[17] In fact, Athena's speech is a striking example of the manner in which Homer's purposes intersect and overlap with those of his characters, as well as of how the singer manages and manipulates his audience by means of the stories which he and his poem's subsidiary narrators tell. Before sense can be made of what follows and thus of Telemachos' story as a whole, therefore, this traditional and much-vexed problem must be confronted head-on.

Once the hyperbole of Page and his predecessors is set aside, it becomes apparent that Athena's advice can be analyzed as a sort of narrative logic-tree, a series of sets of possibilities arranged in the pattern 'either A or B; if B, either C or D; if C, either E or F,' in which each alternative either results in the successful expulsion of the Suitors from the house (cf. i.269–70) or leads to a further pair of choices.[18] Thus (Step I) Telemachos is to call an Assembly the next day and order his enemies to disperse (i.272–4); he should also offer his mother the opportunity to return to her father's house to marry a second time if she wishes (i.275–8). Perhaps one of these two parties will accept his proposal (A), in which case his troubles will be at an end (cf. i.245–51). If the Suitors do not agree to give up their courting and Penelope refuses to take another husband voluntarily (B), however, he should then (Step II) take a ship and set off for Pylos and Sparta after news of his father (i.280–6). There he will learn either that Odysseus is alive (C) or that he is dead (D). If he hears that he is dead (D), he should erect a burial-mound for him and give his mother to another man (i.289–92), thus putting an end to the destruction of his estate; if Odysseus is said to be alive (C), on the other hand, he should hold out in his house for one more year (i.287–8).[19] After that (and assuming his father has not returned in

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[17] Page (1955) 53, 57.

[18] For the style of analysis here, I am indebted to Peradotto (1990) 63–75, esp. 66–70, who is concerned with Tiresias' prophecy at xi.100–37. The analysis of Patzer (1991) 33–5, runs parallel to mine in a number of particulars.

[19] Page (1955) 55, takes i.287–8 to mean Telemachos should spend an entire year abroad if he hears Odysseus is alive. Not only does this make no sense (since why would the boy await his father's homecoming in another country?), but the vocabulary of endurance (τλαίης) and distress (τρυχόμενος) Athena uses is inappropriate for time spent in Sparta in particular (esp. xiii.423–4), but routinely associated with Ithaca (e.g. i.248; iii.209).

the meantime), he should (Step III) consider whether to attack and kill the Suitors by treachery (E) or by open assault (F) (i.293–6), in a manner reminiscent of Orestes (i.298–302).

Page objects to an analysis of this sort on the ground that Athena does not explicitly present Telemachos' trip abroad (i.280–6) as a response to the failure of his proposals to Penelope and the Suitors (i.272–8), and while this is true, it is also beside the point.[20] In fact, the very difficulties and contradictions which result from taking the passage in the way Page suggests are more productively understood as the best reason possible for rejecting his reading of it. If Telemachos is to give Penelope away when he returns from Pylos and Sparta (i.290–2), after all, this can only be because she has declined to marry earlier and he has learned of his father's death while abroad.[21] If the boy is ultimately to think about how to kill the Suitors (i.294–6), on the other hand, not only must they have refused his initial order to leave the house, but his awareness that Odysseus is still alive somewhere must be preventing him from forcing his mother to take another husband. Indeed, when understood this way, Athena's speech can be seen to forecast much of what is to come in Homer's tale not only for his external audience but even, to a more limited extent, for Telemachos himself.[22] The boy is well aware his mother's behavior is driven not just by a distaste for her current crop of suitors (cf. στυγερὸν γάμον i.249) but by a general refusal to forget Odysseus (cf. i.343–4), after all, although in order to preserve her disguise as the more or less naive Mentes (esp. i.225–6) Athena must ignore that fact.[23] Nor is it easy to believe he thinks his enemies will scatter from

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20 Page (1955) 55–6.

21 Cf. Combellack (1956) 414. That it is only news of Odysseus' death which will free Telemachos to take control of the house is also implied by i.287–8, where it is clear that he cannot force a change in the *status quo* if he hears his father is still alive, even if there is no sign of his return.

22 Note also how Athena's advice (or the logic-tree it represents) is divided into its three constituent parts by a series of interjections, which either (re)state the speaker's purposes or urge Telemachos to listen and obey (i.271, 279, 294), and thus mark the formal progress of the argument.

23 Cf. Combellack (1956) 413. West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad i.275–8, objects that 'Mentes' ought to know from Telemachos' remarks at i.249–50 that Penelope does not want to marry one of the Suitors. There is no suggestion here, however, that the new husband Ikarios would find for his daughter would necessarily be one of the young men she has already rejected, and the advice thus makes perfect sense: if your mother is willing to entertain the generic idea of getting married again (as opposed to marrying one of this obviously unacceptable group of suitors), send her to her father's house to do so.

the house at his mere verbal command, given their numbers and their general physical superiority to him (cf. ii.58–62).[24] He must accordingly be able now to see at least one full step ahead in his story, as the fact that he dwells specifically on his journey abroad when he goes to bed that night makes clear (i.443–4; cf. ii.262–5).[25] As for the poet's external audience, they have already been informed by Athena that Telemachos will go to Pylos and Sparta after news of his father (i.93–4) and can therefore have little doubt as to the likely general outcome of the Assembly scheduled for the next day (B, not A). In addition, they know that Odysseus is alive (e.g. i.13–8, 74–5) rather than dead, which makes it at least a substantial possibility that his son will learn the truth about him from Nestor or, more likely, Menelaos (C, not D), particularly since Athena goes on to develop this possibility further (E or F?).[26] That Telemachos may be misinformed by those he visits and attempt to compel his mother to remarry (D, not C) remains a technically open possibility, and Athena's final bit of advice (i.294–6) simultaneously leaves the question of the exact sort of revenge the boy should eventually try to take upon his enemies obscure (E or F?). The more important point is that her words effectively tie the plan she outlines here together with everything she has been saying throughout the scene: what Telemachos must decide is not whether but how he will resemble his violent yet subtle father (cf. i.253–66).

When Athena now disappears suddenly from the hall (i.319–20), a remarkable change comes over Telemachos. Before her visit, he sat among the Suitors, brooding on his father's return but doing and saying nothing (i.114–8), apparently convinced that matters in the house were beyond his control (esp. i.243–51). Now he abruptly puts Penelope in her place when she comes downstairs (i.328–44), asserting his personal authority over the situation there and storytelling (μῦθος) in particular (i.346–59), and evoking astonishment and an

[24] Cf. West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad i.273–4.

[25] Cf. West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad i.279–92.

[26] Cf. West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad i.293ff. That the possibility that Telemachos will learn nothing at all is ignored thus means not that Athena's advice is less comprehensive than it might appear to be (thus West ad i.287–92), but that this is most likely not going to happen.

[27] As we have not seen Telemachos and Penelope interact before this, we have no way of knowing whether or not "previously he would never have spoken to his mother so sharply" (Millar and Carmichael [1954] 60). To the extent that Homer does allow his characters to remember (and thus create) an earlier time, however,

immediate submissive retreat from her (i.360–1).[27] A few lines later he speaks sharply to the Suitors as well, telling them of his intention of ordering them out of his halls (i.372–5; cf. i.272–4) and threatening them with death if they do not obey (i.376–80; cf. i.294–6). They too are stunned by his daring (i.381–2) and Antinoos notes specifically that this does not seem to be the passive little boy they have all grown used to (i.384–5). Something has clearly has come over Telemachos; the question is what it is and what that has to do with the tale Homer is telling and the role played by the image of Odysseus within it.

The first point which must be made in this connection is that, although Telemachos is already resentful of the Suitors when the *Odyssey* begins and eager to see them dead (e.g. i.114–7, 159–60, 250–1), there seems to be no history of bad blood between them, so that they are utterly taken aback when he lashes out against them here (i.381–5). Indeed, the next day Antinoos urges the boy to 'eat and drink with me as before' (ii.305) and it is apparent that in the past he often shared in the Suitors' feasts, oblivious to the impact on his estate.[28] The resentment he feels against them for their depredations at the beginning of Book i (e.g. i.159–60, 248, 250–1) is thus something relatively new and, as he tells Antinoos outright a little later, has to do with his arrival at manhood and the fact that he has begun to listen to what other men say to him (ii.310–6). As Penelope notes expressly in Book xix, so long as he was 'childish and foolish' (νήπιος ἠδὲ χαλίφρων), he told her not to marry again; only now that he has grown up has he become eager to put a stop to the wasting of his property (xix.530–4; cf. xix.159–61).[29] Although Telemachos speaks out boldly for the first time against the Suitors in Book i, therefore, he does not undergo any fundamental personal growth or development there, for he has already changed sometime shortly before the story begins. In proof of this, Athena's final words to him are not an admonition to grow up, but quite specifically an insistence that he act his age (i.296–7; cf. i.301) and in particular be like Orestes

Penelope's remarks in xix.532–4 suggest that assertive behavior of this sort on Telemachos' part began somewhat earlier.

[28] This is also the implication of xvi.27–9, where Eumaios reproaches Telemachos for spending so much time recently in the city with the Suitors.

[29] Note also Eurynome's remarks at xviii.175–6 and Eurykleia's pleasure when Telemachos unexpectedly shows concern for the condition of the arms in the hall (xix.22–3).

(i.298–302), who used the moment of his own entry into ἥβη to take vengeance on his enemies for himself and his father (cf. i.40–1).[30] Allione identifies this remark as the specific source of the boy's subsequent boldness, arguing that he now abruptly realizes who he ought to be and what he ought to do.[31] The text itself does not mention any such reaction, however, and if this is really what happens here, it is remarkable that Telemachos rejects the Orestes-model for himself out of hand in Pylos only two days later (iii.203–9). Perhaps even more to the point, Homer explains the boy's assertiveness in straightforward and explicit terms which hark back directly to Athena's original statement of her purposes on Ithaca. Before she descends from Olympos, she tells Zeus that Telemachos lacks the fighting spirit (μένος) which would drive him to behave in the way he should (i.88–9), and during the course of her visit she gives him precise instructions as to what he is to do (i.269–97) but not the courage with which to carry them out. As she vanishes, therefore, Homer notes expressly that she puts μένος καὶ θάρσος ('a fighting spirit and boldness') into Telemachos' heart (i.320–1), and it is immediately after this that he speaks out aggressively (n.b. θαρσαλέως i.382) against the Suitors and his mother. This is not internal character development, therefore, but a specific external response to an explicit external stimulus. In addition, Homer says that Athena reminds Telemachos of his father even more than before (i.321–2) and notes that he recognizes his mysterious visitor as a god (i.322–3; cf. i.420), and these remarks have equally substantial implications for the meaning of the scene as a whole.

As Book i begins, Telemachos is clearly uncertain about what has happened to his father but inclined toward at least the public expression of pessimism (e.g. i.161–2, 166–8). 'Mentes' has assured him that Odysseus is coming home (i.196–205), however, and Homer's remarks at i.321–3 might therefore be taken to imply that when Telemachos realizes his mysterious visitor and informant has been a god, he concludes on that basis that the prophecy she offered him is accurate, despite her original disclaimer (i.202). Indeed, this is the

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[30] For ἥβη as a decisive moment of personal crisis and transition to adult status, note also xi.307–17; xv.366–70; xviii.216–25; xix.410–2. The Suitors, who do not understand that Telemachos is no longer a boy, accordingly pray he may never reach that age, when he will be genuinely dangerous to them (iv.665–8), and are deceived when he plays the child later on (xxi.131–5).

[31] Allione (1963) 14.

foundation of Austin's interpretation of everything which follows: "Telemachos is no longer in despair but must deliberately maintain the facade of despair."[32] Since he obviously lies to Eurymachos about his mysterious visitor's identity (i.417–20), Austin concludes, he undoubtedly conceals what he knows of Odysseus as well (i.396, 413–6). Telemachos is thus well aware his father is returning, and all his subsequent denials of the fact, including those in the Assembly the next day (ii.46) and to Nestor and Menelaos later (iii.86–95; iv.322–5), are merely clever pretence.

There is a certain lack of clarity in Telemachos' treatment of the idea of Odysseus from the very beginning of Homer's story, and this effectively characterizes him as trapped between desperate hope and utter despair. On the one hand, he continues to imagine his father's return (i.115–7, 163–5) and to talk of him only as 'vanished' (i.219–20, 235–6, 241–2); on the other hand, he is quite capable of asserting that Odysseus is dead and of speaking in extraordinarily graphic terms about his bones rotting on the land somewhere or rolling about the sea (i.161–2). That Telemachos now both remembers his father more than before (i.321–2) and insists he is deceased (i.354–5, 396, 413–6) thus merely continues a well-established pattern of behavior and proves nothing about his deepest personal convictions. The text as a whole, moreover, argues strongly against Austin's thesis, for if Telemachos has in fact grown convinced Odysseus is coming back to Ithaca, much of his behavior throughout Books ii–iv becomes difficult to understand. Why should he call an Assembly to advertise his desperation and impotence (esp. ii.58–62), if he knows his father is likely to return soon, after all, and why should he bother with his trip abroad, if he is certain of the answer to the questions he is supposedly pursuing?[33] If he is only acting thus because these are Athena's orders, why does he join the sad spontaneous weeping for the dead in Sparta (iv.183–5), and why is he so reluctant to recognize Odysseus when the two of them come face-to-face in Eumaios' hut later (esp. xvi.192)? In fact, all the poet says in Book i is that, although Telemachos calls his visitor 'Mentes' when he describes her

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[32] Austin (1969) 54, esp. n. 15.

[33] It is unlikely to be a concern for κλέος which drives Telemachos to go abroad, for while Athena has told Zeus that he is to secure this in Sparta and Pylos (i.95), she has said nothing of the sort to the boy himself. (i.298–302 refer to the revenge to be taken eventually on Ithaca [i.294–7] and have nothing to do with the journey abroad *per se*.)

to the Suitors, 'in his mind he knew the immortal goddess' (i.420), and neither these words nor those at i.322–3 suggest the boy concludes on that basis that Athena told him the truth about his father's captivity and impending arrival.[34] Although Telemachos recognizes his visitor's divinity (i.322–3) and accordingly does his best to follow the advice she has given him (i.372–4, 444; cf. ii.262–6), therefore, the fact that he now remembers Odysseus more than ever (i.321–2) is better taken in some other way, preferably one which conforms to the structure of his story as a whole. As Homer notes quite explicitly here (μᾶλλον ἔτ' ἢ τὸ πάροιθεν i.322), Telemachos has always thought of his father (cf. i.115–7), and that vision has served him as a symbol of hope and a reason for endurance even in an apparently impossible situation (e.g. i.144–65). As everywhere else throughout this scene, therefore, for him to remember Odysseus is not only to recognize the real, enduring possibility of the hero's physical return, but also and more important to use that image as a way of imagining who he himself ought to be and what he ought to do. As a result, in virtually the same breath with which he now declares his father dead (i.396) Telemachos begins to act as he had earlier imagined Odysseus would, by moving to recover his authority as ἄναξ in the house (i.397–8; cf. i.117).

The story of Odysseus thus stands throughout Book i as a symbol of all the possibilities which are not and perhaps never can be realized on Ithaca and, by extension, elsewhere. Telemachos is caught between a dimly imagined and perhaps to some extent fictional past, when his father was present, and he was himself an infant at his mother's breast, and the world was as it should be, and a potentially happy but seemingly unlikely future. To take the story of Odysseus (and thus the possibility for the restoration of all he represents) seriously is to risk living in the present as if it were only the middle of a potentially glorious tale (esp. i.294–302), and by the end of Book i Telemachos has taken one long step in that direction by moving out of a passive acceptance of his world and into an active and engaged relationship with it and thus with storytelling (esp. i.358–9). All the same, to speak of him as 'developing' on an internal level over the

[34] Indeed, he would be foolish to assume anything of the sort, given Athena's fame for lies and deception (esp. xiii.296–9). Note also that when he calls to her on the beach in Book ii, he refers to her not as the divinity who reassured him about Odysseus' fate, but only as 'you who came to our house yesterday and urged me to go to ask about my father's homecoming' (ii.262–5).

course of this scene is to mistake Homer's real interests and concerns. In fact, Telemachos is the same from first to last here; what has changed by the end of Book i is that he has begun to act on the feelings and desires he has had from the very start, which is to say he is attempting to live out what he takes to be his father's story in his own person. Not until Book xvi does he really escape the impotence and isolation in which he is trapped as his tale begins. Over the course of next few days, however, his dilemma and what it means come into increasingly sharper focus.

As an initial step in the program she outlines in Book i, Athena urges Telemachos to call the local people together, tell them his story and forbid the Suitors his house (i.272–4), and early the next morning he does precisely that.[35] His opening speech is built around the image of Odysseus (ii.46–7, 58–62, 71–4)[36] and if his tears as he finishes it (ii.81) have struck some modern readers as odd and childish, they have no such effect on the Assembly.[37] Instead, everyone there is gripped by pity and only Antinoos dares speak out in opposition (ii.81–4). When his subsequent direct request that the Suitors leave him and his family alone (esp. ii.138–45) is rejected (esp. ii.195–200, 203–5), however, Telemachos miscalculates, asking his enemies for the ship he was ordered to get for himself (ii.212–7; cf. i.280–5), and is quickly reduced to both literal and figurative ἀπορία (ii.265–6).

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[35] Since both Athena and Telemachos know Penelope's heart is not inclined toward marriage, 'Mentes" suggestion in this regard (i.275–7) is moot and is treated as such by the boy (ii.130–7).

[36] After this emotional initial appeal fails, Telemachos mentions Odysseus only in a very matter-of-fact manner (ii.209–23). Mentor, however, takes over the image of Odysseus the good father (ii.233–4) to present the hero as a model king who deserves to be remembered by his people (ii.239–41), while Leokritos responds by himself imagining the hero's return to make a thinly veiled threat not only against the speaker who preceded him (thus West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth [1988] ad loc.) but also against the Ithacans as a group: if Odysseus could never drive the Suitors out, neither can they.

[37] West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad ii.40ff, claims that the boy is overcome by weeping before his speech is really over, and insists ad ii.81, that his words have little impact on his audience. Nothing in the text, however, suggests Telemachos breaks off earlier than intended; the first stage of his appeal is simply complete (cf. i.272–3). οἶκτος (ii.81), moreover, is a very powerful emotion in the *Odyssey* and the fact that Telemachos manages to evoke it makes it clear his speech has been effective. Note the parallel scene in Book xxiv, where Eupeithes ('Good at Persuading'; cf. Mühlestein [1971] 46–7) also bursts into tears and evokes pity (xxiv.438), as a result of which he rallies half the Ithacans behind him despite the clear warnings of Medon and Halitherses (xxiv.463–6). For a positive view of Telemachos' performance in this scene, see Shapiro (1972).

Athena insisted on the previous day that Odysseus (i.e. the idealized Telemachos) could make his way wherever he wanted to go (i.203–5), and she in fact successfully collects a crew of local noblemen and a ship while walking around Ithaca in the boy's guise that very afternoon (ii.383–7; cf. iv.649–53). Rather than attempting anything so ambitious, however, Telemachos simply appeals to her for aid (ii.260–6) and she appears, this time in the guise of Mentor (ii.267–8), and once again uses the image of his father to tell him what he ought to do (ii.270–95).

Athena's initial remarks to Telemachos in Book ii are a careful mix of provocation, encouragement and direct orders, and seem designed at least in part to stir him up and put a little fire in his belly (cf. i.89). She tells him first that if he is his father's son he will complete his journey, since Odysseus was capable of finishing whatever task he started (ii.270–3; cf. i.203–5, 260–4); if his ancestry is not what it is supposed to be, on the other hand, he will never accomplish anything (ii.274–5). After this, she makes some pointed observations about how rare it is for a son to turn out better than (or even the equal of) his father (ii.276–7) and appends to these remarks a final, apparently somewhat grudging concession: since Odysseus' μῆτις has not given out altogether in him, there is at least some hope he will eventually make his way abroad (ii.278–80). Despite all this, she does not ask Telemachos to take the lead in planning for his journey or in making the necessary arrangements, tasks he seems unable or unwilling to carry out. Instead, he is to go back to the house and get supplies (ii.288–91) and she takes for herself the problem of getting a boat and companions (ii.286–7, 291–5), noting (perhaps a bit tartly) as she does that 'there are many ships, new and old, in sea-girt Ithaca' (ii.292–3). Throughout the rest of Books ii–iv, in fact, Telemachos by and large merely follows the directions and guidance Athena gives him and seems somewhat lost without her. He accordingly returns home now (ii.296–300) and makes his preparations there (ii.337–55) just as he has been ordered (ii.288–91), improvising to the very limited extent of deciding how much wine and grain to take with him on his voyage (ii.353–5; cf. ii.289–91) and devising an (ultimately unsuccessful) plan to keep Penelope

[38] Telemachos' attempt to deceive Penelope is perhaps an effort to imitate the Odyssean μῆτις Athena has just commended (ii.278–80), but if so, it is a conspicuous failure.

unaware of his absence from Ithaca (ii.373–7; cf. iv.700–49).[38] It is also Athena who calls for him that night at the palace rather than the other way around (ii.393–4, 399–404), and she who leads the way down to the harbor (ii.405–6) and enters the boat first, after which he gets in and sits down beside her (ii.416–8). So too when the two of them reach Pylos, she immediately takes control of the situation, leading the way out of the ship and up to Nestor, while Telemachos merely follows in her tracks (iii.12, 29–30) and repeats the libation and prayer she makes before him (iii.54–64). Although he knows precisely what he is here to do (esp. iii.14–20), moreover, he still hesitates a bit at first (iii.22–4) and she responds not only by encouraging him verbally (iii.26–8), but by giving him θάρσος once again (iii.75–7; cf. i.320-1). On his first night in Sparta, on the other hand, when she is absent (cf. iii.371–2), he sits in silence till the very end of dinner and Peisistratos is forced to argue that his failure to speak up when recognized (esp. iv.113–9, 138–54) is actually a mark of extreme good manners (iv.158–60).[39] In general terms, his personal behavior while abroad is excellent, his fundamental cleverness remains intact and his graceful manner of speaking is twice specifically remarked upon (iii.123–5; iv.609–11).[40] All the same, his personal resources still seem quite limited, his dependence on Athena is obvious and he never becomes anyone other than who he has been from the first. Two things do happen to him, however, while he is abroad. The first is that he hears further stories of Odysseus.

Athena has told Telemachos that the basic purpose of his trip to Pylos and Sparta should be to search out rumors of his father (i.281–6; cf. ii.244–7, 359–60), and when he asks his hosts for any

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[39] There is nothing necessarily wrong with a guest remaining quiet in this way, at least for a limited period of time; cf. xvi.56–89, where Telemachos and Eumaios discuss the Stranger in his presence without any implication that the old man is acting badly by keeping silent, and Odysseus' clear annoyance at Alkinoos' chattiness at vii.208–21. All the same, Peisistratos' apology does mark Telemachos' behavior as a bit odd.

[40] Because Menelaos is so extraordinarily rich (cf. iii.301–2, 312; iv.80–1), his house is magnificent (esp. iv.43), and Homer accordingly says that both Telemachos and Peisistratos are amazed when they first see it (iv.43–4; cf. iv.47). *Pace* Millar and Carmichael (1954) 60, and Schmiel (1972) 464–5, therefore, it is unfair to suggest the boy behaves like an astonished rube here; cf. Odysseus' equally stunned reaction when he arrives before Alkinoos' house (vii.82–3; cf. vii.133–5). Note also that Telemachos is as discreet as he can be when he makes his appreciative comments, leaning up close to Peisistratos to avoid being overheard (iv.70); that Menelaos' hearing is too sharp to make this possible (iv.76) cannot be taken as obvious evidence of his guest's social incompetence.

information they may have, relying once again on the image of Odysseus to appeal to them (iii.98–101 = iv.328–31), they do the best they can for him. For Nestor, Odysseus is a strategist pure and simple, the best man for μῆτις and δόλοι of all those at Troy (iii.120–2). The old man also insists that he and Telemachos' father never disagreed on any occasion in the Assembly or the king's council (iii.126–9), and notes that in the great and foolish division of the Achaian forces after the city was sacked the two of them fled toward home together (iii.155–60). Only after the initial stage of this journey was complete did he and Odysseus part ways (iii.162–6), and since then he has neither seen nor heard anything of him (iii.184–5). Nestor's Odysseus is thus a thinker, talker and counsellor, whose ideas always (with one final, fatal exception) agreed with his own, and like Athena in Book i he claims to see reflections of his friend in the boy who sits before him (iii.123–4; cf. i.206–9). The resemblance he detects, however, has to do specifically with verbal skill and sophistication (iii.124–5). For the old king, at peace in his home and surrounded by his people in general (iii.5–8, 31–3) and his sons and sons-in-law in particular (iii.32, 386–7, 412–5), therefore, Odysseus is primarily a narrative foil, a symbol of who he is and might have been had he not acted with dispatch to avoid the wrath of the gods on his return from Troy (iii.162–5). He knows nothing of any larger significance and cannot offer his guest any obvious hope for an escape from the considerably less ideal situation on Ithaca. The tales told by Helen and Menelaos in Sparta at the beginning of Book iv are much more poignant and packed full of restless and allusive meaning. They too, however, offer no real assistance to Telemachos.

Despite his extraordinary wealth (esp. iv.45–6, 71–91), Menelaos takes little apparent joy in his possessions, but spends his time mourning for his brother and the other men who died at Troy (iv.97–103). The one individual for whom he grieves the most and who best represents for him all the Achaians' sufferings and achievements in the war, he announces to his still-anonymous guests, is Odysseus (iv.104–10), who seems initially to stand in his mind as a symbol of all the losses and disappointments he has endured and of the pointlessness of his labors and the wealth he has accumulated (iv.81–103). Once Telemachos' identity has been revealed, on the other hand, Menelaos begins to use the image of Odysseus in a rather different way, speaking of his deep affection for the boy's father and going so far as to claim he would have transplanted him to

the mainland after the war in order to enjoy more of his company (iv.171–80).[41] The proposal is moot, as Menelaos himself admits at once (iv.181–2), but it does serve to underline just how welcome Telemachos is in Sparta (cf. iv.169–70). When the feasters all respond to this speech by dissolving into weeping (iv.183–8), finally, Helen adds a drug of forgetfulness of grief to the wine (iv.219–26) and offers the first of two further tales of the vanished hero's exploits (iv.242–64, 271–89).[42] Nominally, these are reminiscences of Odysseus' great deeds in the war at Troy told for the benefit of his adolescent son (cf. iv.162–7). On another and more significant level, however, the stories of Helen and Menelaos are carefully crafted commentaries on the tellers' own character and on the odd and troubled relationship which exists between them.[43]

Helen speaks first and tells the tale of a spying mission by a disguised Odysseus, who infiltrated Troy, was recognized by and confided in her, and left, killing many of his enemies on the way out and carrying back precious intelligence to the Greeks (iv.242–64). On its simplest level, this story reveals the bravery, self-sacrifice and inventiveness of Telemachos' father (esp. iv.244–6), his wiliness (esp. iv.250–1) and murderous military efficiency (iv.257), and the value of his services to his allies (iv.258).[44] At the same time, Helen's tale has a great deal of good to say about the narrator herself.[45] She tended

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[41] Ahl (1989) 8–9, argues that Menelaos is trying to determine the identity of his obviously noble (iv.62–4) guest by telling suggestive stories and anecdotes in order to judge his reaction, and suggests that for a while he suspects he may be Orestes. None of the reactions Ahl believes Menelaos gauges are explicit in the text, however, and Homer clearly implies that Menelaos met the real Orestes after the murder of Aigisthos and Klytemestra (iii.306–12; iv.546–7), so that no confusion with him is possible in any case.

[42] Helen, Menelaos and Telemachos clearly weep for Odysseus (iv.169–85), whom they all knew and loved. Peisistratos, on the other hand, is weeping for Antilochos (iv.186–8, 197–202), who also failed to return from Troy, and he, like everyone else in the poem, thus interprets Odysseus' story in his own private way.

[43] Some of what follows is adapted from Olson (1989a). On these stories as a veiled dialogue between Menelaos and Helen, see also Schmiel (1972); Clader (1976) 33–5; Goldhill (1988) 19–24; Ahl (1989) 8–13. Clader (1976) 37–9, and Andersen (1977) note some of the connections with Book xix. On the scene as a whole, see also Barck (1971) 23–6; Fenik (1974) 21–8; Bergren (1981); cf. Anderson (1958) 6–10; Powell (1970).

[44] Cf. Andersen (1977) 8.

[45] Cf. Schmiel (1972) 467–9; Andersen (1977) 4. None of this is really inconsistent with the picture of Helen in III.121–242, 383–447. On Homer's view of Helen, see Ryan (1965); Groten (1968); for her myth-historical background, see Clader (1976); Skutsch (1987).

Odysseus carefully when he appeared (iv.252–3), she insists, and claims that although she recognized him from the very first (iv.250; cf. iv.138–44), she vowed not to denounce him until he had escaped (iv.253–5). The other Trojan women wailed when they learned of what he had done (iv.259), but she rejoiced, for she had already repented of her madness in coming to Troy (iv.259–62). All she wanted then was precisely what she has now, to be at home with her child and her husband, whom she describes in overtly flattering terms as 'lacking in nothing as to good sense or good looks' (iv.263–4). Despite this delicate final disclaimer, Helen's story is peculiar in a number of ways. Rather than allowing Odysseus to go about his business unhindered once she recognized him (cf. iv.250), first of all, she questioned him repeatedly (ἀνηρώτων iv.251), and her subsequent ministrations to 'the beggar's' apparent needs (iv.252–3) had the practical effect of destroying the disguise he had so carefully and painfully adopted (esp. iv.245, 247–8). Instead of keeping his identity to herself, moreover, she made it public as soon as he had escaped (cf. iv.254–5). Her attitude toward Odysseus is thus oddly confused and he seems to function in her tale as a sort of idealized crypto-Helen, a Helen in disguise. Like Menelaos' wife on Paris' arm, at least in her own view of things, Odysseus enters Troy in the guise of someone base, someone he 'really is not' (iv.245, 247–8). Everyone is fooled except Helen herself, who alone knows 'the stranger's' true identity (iv.250), which can only be revealed when an escape has been made to the Greek camp (iv.254–5), but the price of that revelation is the lives of many Trojans (iv.257), and in the meantime Helen seems tortured by her secret and compelled somehow to disclose it (esp. iv.254–5).[46]

Menelaos responds with a delicate counter-narrative (iv.271–89), which is in many ways the same as his wife's, although clothed in a different set of circumstances.[47] Once again Odysseus and Helen are central characters; once again disguised Greeks enter Troy, this time inside the Wooden Horse (iv.272; cf. iv.249); once again they escape all suspicion (cf. iv.249–50) until they encounter Menelaos' fugitive wife, who engages in a series of curious and suggestive actions,

[46] Indeed, if one follows up this line of reasoning, it is tempting to suggest that in the coded and idealized narrative guise of Odysseus Helen suffers vicariously the punishment she knows she deserves (iv.244).

[47] Cf. Andersen (1977) 10.

circling the Horse and stroking it, mimicking the voices of the wives of the men within in a way which seems calculated to drive them to reveal themselves (iv.277–9; cf. iv.250–3). All the same, they ultimately escape and bring death and destruction to their enemies (iv.273; cf. iv.257). Like Helen's story, this tale is on its surface only a reminiscence of the remarkable abilities of Odysseus, whose fast thinking in restraining Menelaos and Diomedes from going out of the Horse and in holding Antiklos so he could not cry out reveals his coolheadness and the endurance in his heart, as well as his ability to command and control the men around him (cf. iv.282–8). At the same time, however, and in implicit response to his wife's claim that she had long been active on the Greek side in the war, Menelaos depicts a Helen who worked against the Argives even on the final night of Troy. The blame for this is naturally placed once again upon a malevolent deity (iv.274–5; cf. iv.261–2), but there is no escaping the fact that Helen's behavior nearly put a disastrous end not only to the Greeks' strategem but to her abandoned husband's life as well (iv.277–83).[48] Once again, moreover, Odysseus plays a secondary, covert role as an ideal version of the narrator. Menelaos and Odysseus come into the city together with a common purpose and are inside the Horse with one another as the story begins (iv.272–3), but whereas Menelaos is unable to restrain himself in his wife's presence, his dramatic alter-ego can (iv.282–4). The idealized Odysseus thus behaves as the storyteller 'ought to have' by checking his readiness to respond to Helen's voice, and so brings about a 'proper' resolution to the conflict of a sort obviously not imposed in the real world of post-war Sparta (esp. iv.304–5).[49] Helen's and Menelaos' stories of Odysseus are accordingly not only inspiring accounts of his exploits but also subtle acts of self-justification, self-explanation and mutual recrimination. All the same, they do nothing to improve Telemachos' situation, and the boy therefore brings the evening to an close with the gloomy observation that none of this profitted his father or by extension himself (iv.292–3). When Helen is absent on

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[48] Cf. Schmiel (1972) 468–9; Bergren (1981) 208–13. Helen's utter lack of personal freedom is one of her most 'feminine' characteristics, but is largely disregarded by Katz (1991).

[49] Menelaos' willingness to take Helen back does not square easily with the much more rigorous sexual standards imposed in Ithaca at the end of the poem (esp. xxii.417–73) and seems to have been something of a scandal in the ancient world (e.g. Ar. *Lys.* 155–6; E. *Tro.* 969–1059; *Hec.* 265–70).

the next day, on the other hand, Menelaos uses the image of his unhappy comrade-in-arms to very different effect and finally offers his guest the information he is after.

When Telemachos asks for news of his father the next morning (iv.315–31), Menelaos begins by expressing disgust at the Suitors' behavior as the boy describes it (esp. iv.333–4) and accordingly prefaces his response with a vivid image of fawns left in a lion's bed (iv.335–9), insisting a very similar destruction will overtake Odysseus' enemies when he comes back to Ithaca (iv.340).[50] This is a remarkably bold assertion and Menelaos follows it up with an account of how his friend once wrestled Philomeleides and threw him hard (iv.341–4), adding to this a fervent wish that he might return home in precisely the same fashion (iv.345–6). This initial story thus depicts Odysseus as successful in violent confrontations with other men and Menelaos leaves little doubt as to what his personal reaction (here superimposed on his recollection of the past) to a similar triumph over the Suitors would be: 'and all the Achaians rejoiced' (iv.344). Once the first heat of his anger (cf. iv.332) is over, however, the Spartan king replaces confident assertion (iv.340) with earnest wish (iv.345) and, given the unhappy news he has to offer (iv.555–60), it is difficult to believe he sees the return of Telemachos' father to Ithaca as a realistic possibility. The bulk of his speech is occupied by a report of his encounter with the Old Man of the Sea (iv.450–586) and of what he learned from him concerning the homecomings of the Achaians (esp. iv.495–560), and the final bit of news is about Odysseus, who is detained by Kalypso and unable to get home (iv.555–60). In their original context, Proteus' remarks draw a strong contrast between Menelaos, who has met a friendly nymph and has a ship and companions with which to escape the island where he is marooned (iv.354–62; cf. iv.576–86), and Odysseus, who enjoys none of these advantages. Indeed, Proteus goes on to expand this contrast by announcing that the Spartan king (unlike, it seems, his Ithacan counterpart) will receive a πομπή (iv.563–4; contrast iv.559–60), in his case to Elysium, where he will live forever (iv.561–9).[51] For Telemachos, who has now accomplished what Athena told him was to be the goal of his journey (i.280–3), however, the implications of

[50] On the development of this image in the *Odyssey*, see McGrath (1982).

[51] Cf. Crane (1988) 15; Ahl (1989) 12. Anderson (1958) offers a considerably darker view.

the tale are far less positive, for he is now faced with another full year of waiting (i.287–8) and even then it is not clear how he will proceed against the Suitors (cf. i.293–6). He thus seems to be in precisely the same position as he was when the poem began, for although he has learned a bit more of the past, which is to say of Odysseus, he has no reason to believe that knowledge will translate into a more liveable future. When he sums up his position to the still-anonymous Stranger in Eumaios' hut a few days later, therefore, he does so in precisely the same words he used in Book i: he is trapped in an impossible situation and has little choice but to wait to be destroyed (xvi.122–8 = i.245–51). As Odysseus says outright somewhat earlier, it is not immediately clear what good all this travelling has done him or why, if Athena knew his father's whereabouts all along, she sent him away from home and thus into danger (xiii.417–9). In fact, Telemachos' time abroad has not been wasted, and the question of what he has accomplished brings us back once again to the beginning of Homer's story and to the problem of κλέος in Achaian society.

When Athena announces her purposes on Ithaca to Zeus at the first divine Assembly in Book i, she says she intends to send Telemachos to Pylos and Sparta not only after news of his father, but also in order that 'κλέος ἐσθλόν among men might have him' (i.95), and when she speaks to Odysseus about the boy at xiii.422–3 she makes it clear he has already accomplished this. Rose argues that Athena's reference at i.296–302 to Orestes' fame and her insistence that Telemachos should emulate him means that his κλέος as well will spring from his fixed resolve to take revenge upon his enemies and from his willingness to make a risky journey abroad and devise a crafty return home.[52] It is clear from the Suitors' reaction to what seems to them the boy's independent success in recruiting a ship and crew that he grows considerably in their estimation as a result (esp. iv.663–7) and, Antinoos implies, in that of the other local people as well (xvi.372–82). All the same, Telemachos never openly expresses a bold Orestes-like determination to take revenge upon the Suitors while he is in Pylos and Sparta (esp. iii.205–9, 226–8),[53] and although

[52] Rose (1967), esp. 392–4; cf. West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad i.95; Katz (1991) 63–72; Patzer (1991) 18–9, 32–3. Nothing in the text supports the assertion of Katz 69, that at xv.88–91 Telemachos associates his homecoming with a concern for his own κλέος.

[53] I argue in Chapter 2 that the boy's questions at iii.248–52 may be a discreet

he is several times commended there for his oratorical abilities (iii.124–5; iv.611), his modest manners (iv.158–60) and his kingly good looks (iv.26–7, 63–4), no-one ever mentions his courageous avenging spirit. Nor is there really much that is daring about his voyage to Pylos, for which he has a favorable wind and the assistance of a god (esp. ii.420–1), while his κλέος is already secure by the time he sails back from there (n.b. κεῖσ' ἐλθών xiii.423). In addition, as Jones points out, Athena's remarks in Book xiii make it clear that the sort of κλέος Telemachos wins for himself is entirely compatible with living in great comfort and ease in Menelaos' palace (xiii.423–4), having as yet done nothing at all to take revenge for his house or his father.[54] In fact, the boy fulfils Athena's final goal for him while he is abroad not by deeds of extraordinary valor but simply by showing himself in the world under her escort and simultaneously gaining recognition as his father's son (cf. i.236–40).

When Telemachos first confronts Nestor in Pylos, it is in the context of a great public gathering (iii.7–8), and when he hesitates momentarily to speak up (iii.22–4), Homer notes that Athena gives him courage (θάρσος) specifically in order that he might gain κλέος among men (iii.75–8; cf. iii.26–8).[55] This is the only point in Books i–iv at which anything of the sort is said to happen and it is accordingly worth noting that the first thing Telemachos does when the conversation begins is to identify himself as Odysseus' son (iii.83–5). So too when Nestor responds by praising his guest's oratorical abilities, he does so specifically by noting that they prove his ancestry is what he claims it is (iii.122–4; cf. iv.611). After Athena makes a great show of disappearing from the midst of the assembled people like a bird (iii.371–2), finally, Nestor announces the significance of this event to everyone present by pointing out once again how it assimilates Telemachos to what is known and said of his father (iii.375–9; cf.

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attempt to ask how he could murder the Suitors, but this is a far cry from openly declaring an intention to confront them.

[54] Jones (1988); the passage is ignored by Katz (1991) and Patzer (1991). Jones goes on to argue that Telemachos' κλέος depends on his discovery of his own identity as he learns about Odysseus, but the Greek at i.95 in particular will not bear this sense and κλέος in the *Odyssey* always reflects what others think and say of one, not what one thinks of oneself.

[55] iii.75–8 is not discussed by Jones (1988); Katz (1991); or Patzer (1991). iii.78 is missing in two papyri and a number of medieval manuscripts (cf. West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth [1988] ad loc.), but this is probably insufficient grounds for questioning its authenticity, given that the Alexandrian editors appear to have been comfortable with it.

iii.218–24). To have a god accompany and stand beside one is an extraordinary thing even in the Homeric world and Telemachos can accordingly expect to be described to anyone who visits Pylos, where telling stories is a basic part of life (esp. iii.186–7; iv.190–2; cf. xv.151–3, 155–6), in an awed and respectful manner, not only as Odysseus' child but as someone who has the uncommon potential even to equal him (cf. ii.276–7).[56] So too in Sparta, although the boy declines Menelaos' offer to take him on a tour of the Argive nobility (xv.80–91), he is feasted with the other local men as the action there comes to its initial close (iv.621–4), and what men do in such situations is routinely remembered and reported to others (e.g. xviii.215–25).

By the time Telemachos is ready to leave Sparta in Book xv, therefore, he has carried out the entire agenda Athena set for him at the beginning of the poem (i.93–5): not only has he successfully sought word of his vanished father, but he has got himself a good reputation among men as well. Despite that fact, he remains in an awkward and difficult situation, trapped between the past (or what he takes to be the past) and the future, which is to say between κλέος and its implications. He knows how the world should be, if only because it has become clear to him how it once was, and he would give almost anything to see that allegedly lost order restored. For the moment, however, there is no obvious hope for him and no apparent escape from the increasingly desperate reality in which he finds himself. As he finally prepares to leave Menelaos' palace, therefore, he expresses the heartfelt wish that he could see his father in his halls upon his return (xv.156–9) and is emphatic about how happy he would be were Helen's positive interpretation of the sign of the eagle and the goose (xv.160–2, 174–8) to prove correct (xv.180–1). That possibility alone could set him free; otherwise he must simply continue to wait and perhaps someday, although not yet, attempt to play the hero. Until his reunion with Odysseus in Book xvi, therefore, Telemachos is in a constant state of grief and uncertainty, both because he believes in stories, which is to say in the reality of his father and all that reality implies, and because he is not yet, at least as far as he knows, a part of one himself. So too Homer's external audience is trapped between this tale of a world in which the gods

[56] At xiii.422–3, therefore, Athena associates the escort she provided Odysseus' son closely with the fact that he obtained a good reputation while abroad.

move about freely and almost openly and the evil are punished while the good prosper, and the much less ideal situation in which they (and we) actually live. The sudden reversal in Telemachos' situation which takes place in Eumaios' hut halfway through Book xvi thus has substantial implications for the meaning of the *Odyssey* as a whole. Before turning to what happens there, however, I must confront a substantial objection to the reading of the boy's character and adventures which I have presented here. Perhaps I have misrepresented him and thus the poet's story completely.

CHAPTER FIVE

OF TIME AND THE POET: THE INTERNAL CHRONOLOGY OF THE *ODYSSEY*

Homer leaves Telemachos in Sparta near the end of Book iv (iv.620–4), describes events on Ithaca briefly (iv.625–847) and then speaks of a council of the gods, at which Athena complains of Odysseus' captivity (v.13–7) and the treatment his son is receiving at the hands of the Suitors (v.18–9). As commentators have always noted, there is something odd about this second divine Assembly. On the one hand, Athena by and large only repeats there what she said at the first council in Book i (compare v.13–7 and i.48–59), where Hermes' mission to Ogygia is also already envisioned (i.84–7), so that it is almost as if we are seeing the same scene for a second time.[1] On the other hand, this is quite emphatically a new day (v.1–2), and Athena's specific reference to events in Books i–iv (v.18–20) shows that Odysseus' escape from Ogygia must somehow be subsequent to Telemachos' trip abroad. Unfortunately, this apparently straightforward interpretation leads to a number of substantial problems in making sense of the larger action of the poem and the behavior of the characters within it. In particular, Zeus now waits close to a week to send Hermes to Kalypso, despite having agreed to do so much earlier (cf. i.84–7 with v.28–43), and no-one has ever offered a convincing explanation of why he would be so negligent.[2] Even worse, on this hypothesis Telemachos spends almost a month in Sparta, despite having got the news he wanted on his first full day there (iv.555–60; cf. i.93–4), and is thus forgetful and foolish at best, a coward and a shirker at worst, and in any case inferior to the hesitant but generally diligent young man I have argued we see throughout Books i–iv.[3] Athena must bear part of the blame for Telemachos' behavior, however, for she does

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[1] For a typically extreme statement of the problem and an equally extreme solution to it, see Page (1955) 68–71; cf. Kirk (1962) 233–4, and the responses of Dyson (1970); and Apthorp (1977). Hainsworth, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) 251–3, offers a brief discussion of the question and further bibliography.

[2] For the figures alluded to here, see the detailed discussion below.

[3] For the connection between Telemachos' character and the amount of time spent in Sparta, see Apthorp (1980), responding to Austin (1969).

nothing about Zeus' order to send him back to Ithaca (v.25–7) until xv.1–3, many weeks later and a full day after Odysseus has already arrived there (cf. xiii.404–15).

Close to a century ago, Thaddaeus Zielinski attempted to resolve these difficulties by arguing that they reflect a divergence between Homer's conception of his story ("die wirkliche Handlung") and what he was actually able to do ("die scheinbare Handlung").[4] On occasion, Zielinski argued, the poet conceived of several actions as going on simultaneously but, because he was locked into a rigidly consecutive narrative style (which Zielinski seems to have believed was natural and right for all poetry), was forced to make one appear to follow the other.[5] Thus in the fifteenth Book of the *Iliad* Iris and Apollo are initially seen standing together before Zeus awaiting his orders (XV.154–5), but Homer does not describe the dispatch and mission of the latter to Hektor (XV.220–62) until the former has made her way to Poseidon and had an extended conversation with him (XV.157–219). There is no obvious reason why Zeus should fail to send his two messengers off together, and it thus seems a reasonable assumption that that is how the poet imagined the action as occurring, although in performance he rendered the embassies consecutive.[6] So too in the *Odyssey*, Zielinski argued, although Homer originally conceived of his hero's escape from Ogygia as going on at the same time as Telemachos' trip to Pylos and Sparta, when it came time to tell his story he altered that conception a bit in order to make one set of events follow after the other. The two divine Assemblies, in other words, were initially imagined as a single meeting from which Athena and Hermes were sent forth at the same time, but have multiplied and sown confusion in their wake. Although Telemachos does in one sense spend close to a month in Sparta, therefore, this need not be taken seriously, for it is an essentially accidental by-product of the poet's storytelling style.[7]

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[4] Zielinski (1899–1901) 405–49.

[5] "Die Poesie ist die Kunst des Nacheinanders schlechthin" (Zielinski [1899–1901] 414). Zielinski did concede that Homer could represent previous action by means of speeches of recollection (417), but rightly insisted that is different from the problem under discussion here. For some of the difficulties with Zielinski's general aesthetic theory of time in narrative, see Krischer (1971) 97–100. For a very different approach to time in Homer, see Vivante (1970).

[6] Zielinski (1899–1901) 444.

[7] Zielinski (1899–1901) 444–5; cf. Fränkel (1931) 97–100, = (1955) 1–4, with the critical comments of Krischer (1971) 100–2. Zielinski 443–4, also notes xvii.48–62, where Telemachos tells Penelope to wash, change clothing and pray to the gods for

Zielinski's hypothesis is now routinely identified as a standard law of Homeric narrative, although (as I will argue in detail below) the question is in fact far more complex than this.[8] Matters have been rendered much more confusing as a result of the widespread acceptance of the theories of Édouard Delebecque, who in 1958 took up and expanded Zielinski's views in order to defend the *Odyssey* against the attempts of analyst critics to discover problems with its internal chronology and thus prove it an incompetent and incoherent assemblage of earlier material.[9] Delebecque's response was to articulate an Iron Law of Narrative Sequence ("la loi de succession"), which states that every character in Homer's story is carried forward in time at precisely the same pace, and that if an hour or a day passes for one, we are automatically entitled and indeed required to assume it passes for every other. On this basis, he constructed a precise 40-day chronology for the poem, designed to account for and coordinate all action within it.[10] Thus the story follows Telemachos from "Day 1" to "Day 6" in Sparta; it then turns to Odysseus, whose release from Ogygia is ordered on "Day 7" and who finally arrives on Ithaca on "Day 35"; at this point attention shifts back to Telemachos, who now sets off hastily for Ithaca; father and son are reunited in Eumaios' hut on "Day 38" and take their revenge on "Day 40." The occasional blank spots in one storyline or the other which result from this analysis, Delebecque argued, can all be accounted for logically in one way or another. Thus Telemachos, for example, was so captivated by Helen's beauty that he could not tear himself away from Menelaos' palace until long after he should have gone.[11]

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revenge (xvii.48–51), but does not leave the house (xvii.61–2) until after she has done all this (xvii.58–60), despite his obvious eagerness to be off (xvii.52–3). Zielinski seems to regard this a different sort of case, since Penelope's actions are a straightforward fulfilment of her son's orders, but it is in fact very difficult to discriminate between the two. Note also VI.494–516, discussed by Bassett (1938) 35.

[8] For simultaneous action presented in a consecutive form as standard epic practice, see Page (1955) 65; Beye (1966) 159; Erbse (1972) 39; Reece (1993) 72.

[9] Delebecque (1958); cf. (1970).

[10] Delebecque (1958) 11–7. See Table 1, a slightly simplified version of Delebecque's first table (between his 12–3). Pfister (1948) 141–3, makes similar calculations but fails to take account of Telemachos' extra day in Book xv (see below) and accordingly places Odysseus' revenge on Day 39. Delebecque believed xxiii.297–xxiv.548 were inauthentic (15) and therefore excluded what he might otherwise have called the *Odyssey's* Day 41 from his calculations. The question has been debated since antiquity; note the 2nd or 3rd century C.E. papyrus published by Schubart (1950) 7–9, more readily accessible at Galiano (1953), which offers a careful list of the verses at which new days within the poem begin.

[11] Delebecque (1958) 25–6.

Table 1: Delebecque's 40-day Chronology (slightly simplified)

Days/Nights	*Odysseus*	*Telemachos*
Day 1:		First divine Assembly; Athena visits Ithaca (i)
Day 2:		Assembly; departure for Pylos (ii)
Day 3:		In Pylos (iii.1–403)
Day 4:		From Pylos to Pherai (iii.404–90)
Day 5:		From Pherai to Sparta; meeting with Helen and Menelaos (iii.491–iv.305)
Day 6:		Menelaos' story (iv.306–624)
Day 7:	Second divine Assembly; Hermes sent to Kalypso (v.1–227)	
Days 8 to 11:	Odysseus builds his raft (v.228–62)	
Days 12 to 28:	Seventeen days of sailing (v.263–78)	
Days 29 & 30:	Two days of storms (v.279–389)	
Day 31:	Odysseus lands on Scheria (v.390–493); Athena visits Nausikaa (vi.1–47)	
Day 32:	Encounter of Odysseus and Nausikaa (vi.48–331); Odysseus in Alkinoos' palace (vii)	
Day 33:	Festival day on Scheria (viii); Odysseus' story (ix–xii); more gifts and night in palace (xiii.1–17)	
Day 34:	Feast on Scheria (xiii.18–30); departure for Ithaca (xiii.31–92)	
Day 35:	Arrival on Ithaca and encounter with Athena (xiii.93–125, 187–440); visit to Eumaios (xiv)	
		Late at night, Athena visits Telemachos in Sparta (xv.1–55)

Day 36:		To Pherai from Sparta (xv.56–188)
Day 37:		To Pylos from Pherai; night-time voyage to Ithaca (xv.189–300). Night spent telling stories with Eumaios (xv.301–494)
Day 38:		Arrival on Ithaca and walk to Eumaios' hut (xv.495–557)
	Two Strands United	
	Reunion at hut (xvi.1–321); night in hut (xvi.452–81)	
Day 39:	To palace separately (xvii); Odysseus in his palace (xviii); Odysseus and Penelope (xix); a miserable night (xx.1–90)	
Day 40:	The attack on the Suitors (xx.91–xxiii.296)	

Neither Delebecque's Iron Law nor his precise 40-day scheme has ever been exposed to systematic critical scrutiny, perhaps in part because Homer's storytelling style does have obvious consecutive tendencies, and his interpretation has now attained a status approaching that of orthodoxy.[12] In fact, the 40-day hypothesis is incompatible with the Homeric text, and as a result there is no lost month in Sparta and no need to reevaluate Telemachos' character on that basis.[13] Zielinski's conception of the poet's treatment of time is nonetheless fundamentally correct, although he did not argue his case as effectively or completely as he might have. My basic guiding concern here is still with Telemachos and how we are to understand him and his story. All the same, I also hope to show that close

[12] This is the fundamental basis for the attack mounted by Apthorp (1980) on Austin (1969), for example, and for the unfavorable characterization of Menelaos' hospitality by Reece (1993) 71–99. Stanford (1958–59) x–xii, and ad xv.1ff, by and large presents the same scheme, but drops Day 36 as a way of dealing (none too well) with the problem posed by Book xv (for which, see below).

[13] In this I am in general agreement with the conclusions of Hölscher (1939), esp. 2–3, 53–6. Focke (1943) 3–8, and Eisenberger (1973) 84–6, argue that the conversation between Telemachos and Menelaos at iv.587–99 should be interpreted to mean that the boy agrees, despite some misgivings, to stay for a while although not for a long time, but this requires some violence to the text and must be regarded as a solution of last resort.

attention to his tale can offer rare insights into the methods and concerns of Homer the narrator.[14]

The case against Telemachos depends above all else upon Delebecque's 40-day chronology, and I accordingly begin with it, since little progress can be made on any other front until it has been put out of the way. The crucial text in this connection is Book xv. Book xiv ends as Odysseus and Eumaios go to sleep on the evening of the hero's first day in the hut (xiv.518–33), which Delebecque identifies as the poem's overall Day 35.[15] Homer then turns his attention to Telemachos, who is lying awake in bed sometime near dawn in Sparta (xv.1–8) and leaves there early the next day ("Day 36"), travelling to Pherai, where he spends the night ("Night 36") (xv.182–8). He goes on to Pylos on "Day 37" (xv.189–93) and sails for home that night ("Night 37") (xv.296–300). At dawn the next day ("Day 38"), he arrives on Ithaca (xv.495–7) and heads off to Eumaios' hut, where he spends that night ("Night 38") with his father and the swineherd (xvi.480–1). Over the course of Books xv–xvi, therefore, Telemachos' story occupies precisely four days and, much more to the point, four nights: one in Sparta ("Night 35"), one in Pherai ("Night 36"), one onboard his ship ("Night 37"), and one in the hut ("Night 38"). Toward the end of the next day ("Day 39"), however, Eumaios reports to Penelope that the Stranger spent only three nights with him in the country (xvii.515–6). The first of these is occupied by Odysseus' tale of the supposed misadventure at Troy, which he offers in order to get himself a robe in which to sleep (xiv.457–533); the second must be the night in the middle of Book xv, during which Eumaios tells the story of his youth and how he was kidnapped from his native island (xv.301–494); the third is certainly the night which he and Odysseus spend together in the hut

[14] Richardson (1990) 89–108, esp. 90–5, discusses the way in which the *Odyssey*-poet handles time, but does not address the question of the larger temporal structure of his story directly. Nor do the examples of supposedly "simultaneous action" which Richardson 94–5, 225–7 n. 14, offers really touch on the question of whether Homer ever first gives a detailed description of one series of events and then moves back in time to offer another, equally detailed description of another series of events going on simultaneously, particularly in another place, as in Zielinski (1899–1901) 404 fig. 4. For background action which goes on while something else is narrated in detail (e.g. Odysseus' weeping at v.81–4; cf. v.151–3), see also Hellwig (1964), esp. 75–86; this is not the sort of action under discussion here.

[15] For all this, see Table 2 (below). I retain Delebecque's numbering system only in order to make the problems with his thesis apparent.

with Telemachos (xvi.480–1). If we accept Delebecque's synchronization, these can only be "Nights 35, 37 and 38"; Odysseus' "Night 36," which ought to be coordinated with the night Telemachos spends in Pherai, is missing from the text (Table 2). It is important to note that the difficulty is not merely that we lack information as to what happens to Odysseus on this night, for small narrative blank spots of that sort are not unusual in Homer and one would not be disturbing here. Instead, the problem is that in this section of the story the tale of Telemachos requires four nights ("Nights 35, 36, 37 and 38"), while Odysseus' can accommodate only three ("Nights 35, 37 and 38"). Simply put, there is no room in Odysseus' story for Telemachos' "Night 36," and it is thus impossible to maintain there is a straightforward overall chronological unity to the *Odyssey*. Delebecque's 40-day scheme, along with all its troubling critical consequences, crumbles away to nothing.[16]

Table 2: Comparative Chronologies in Books xiv–xvi

Days/Nights	*Odysseus*	*Telemachos*
Night 35	xiv.457–533 (in Eumaios' hut)	xv.1–55 (in Sparta)
Day 36	—	xv.56–184 (journey to Pherai)
Night 36	—	xv.185–8 (in Pherai)
Day 37	—	xv.189–295 (to Pylos; departure for Ithaca)
Night 37	xv.301–494 (in Eumaios' hut)	xv.296–300 (voyage to Ithaca)
Day 38	xvi.1–321 (reunion)	xv.495–557; xvi.11–321 (return to Ithaca; reunion)
Night 38	xvi.452–81 (in Eumaios' hut)	xvi.452–81 (in Eumaios' hut)
	= 3 Nights (cf. xvii.515–6)	= 4 Nights

[16] That there is a problem with the internal chronology of Book xv is widely recognized; cf. Zielinski (1899–1901) 446; Hölscher (1939) 33; Page (1955) 66–8; Stanford (1958–59) ad xv.1ff. All the same, no-one seems ever to have pointed out its implications for Delebecque's thesis. Delebecque (1958) 33–6, does his best to

Despite Delebecque's conviction to the contrary, therefore, the stories of Odysseus and his son are not linked together from the very first in an obvious and straightforward chronological lockstep.[17] Instead, they are like two separate streams, which begin independently in Books i and v respectively and only flow together and merge at the beginning of Book xvi, after which they cannot be distinguished or divided. As Hölscher says, "What lies between the first and second scenes with Menelaos [i.e. in Books iv and xv] is not a month, but the homecoming of Odysseus."[18] Fortunately, this makes perfect sense of the story as we have it.

As Delebecque himself points out, Telemachos seems initially to believe his journey abroad will take only ten days or so, since he tells Eurykleia to try to avoid informing Penelope of his absence until that much time has passed in order that she might not cry for him and thus mar her beauty (ii.373–6; cf. iv.746–9).[19] If we ignore the intrusive (and, as I have argued above, chronologically independent) story of Odysseus in Books v–xiv, this is almost exactly what happens. Telemachos leaves Ithaca on the night of what we can, following Delebecque at least this far, call his Day 2 (esp. ii.388–90, 434). He spends Day 3 listening to Nestor (iii.4–329) and sleeps that night in the old king's palace (iii.397–9). On Day 4 he travels as far as Pherai and sleeps there (iii.481–90), and comes to Sparta toward evening on his Day 5 (iii.491–iv.2). His Day 6 includes Menelaos' extended account of his wanderings (iv.306–592) and a feast (iv.621–4), and although evening of that day does not come expressly for the boy, it does for the other characters in his story: the Suitors have their meal and wait for dusk (iv.786), while Penelope is reassured by

avoid this difficulty by insisting Eumaios means he only had the Stranger to himself for three days and nights, since Telemachos sent him off to the city on "Day 38" and stayed in the hut that evening, but that is not what the text says.

[17] I argue below that there seems to be evidence of an original coordination of the two stories, but that is a separate and very different matter.

[18] Hölscher (1939) 2: "Was zwischen der ersten und der zweiten Menelaosszene liegt, ist nicht ein Monat, sondern die Ruckkehr des Odysseus." Page (1955) 67, closely paraphrases this remark.

[19] Delebecque (1958) 24. Note also the twelve amphorae of wine and twenty measures of barley Telemachos orders Eurykleia to prepare for him (ii.349–55). These are nice, metrically convenient numbers and we ought therefore perhaps not to make too much of them. Since the twenty measures of barley match the number of men who will make up his crew (cf. i.280), however, it is at least conceivable that the twelve amphorae of wine represent one for each day of the maximum projected length of the journey (ii.374).

Athena about her son's homecoming and drifts off to sleep with the dark (esp. iv.841), as the Suitors set their ambush (iv.842–7).[20] As Apthorp has shown, time regularly moves forward for all these characters and Telemachos *en bloc*.[21] Thus in Book iv Noemon asks Antinoos if he knows when the boy will be back on Ithaca (iv.632–3) and goes on to note with puzzlement that he saw Mentor 'yesterday morning,' although he thought he was leading the expedition to Pylos (iv.653–6). Noemon's confusion only makes sense if this is at least the second day since Telemachos' departure (i.e. Day 4), and although we have heard nothing of the Suitors since ii.395–8 (Day 2), it thus seems clear that time has moved forward for them (and presumably for everyone else on Ithaca) at more or less the same pace as it has for Odysseus' son. These individuals belong to a single storyline from the very first, after all, and it is entirely understandable that a single chronology binds them all together; obviously this is something very different from the universal Law of Narrative Sequence which Delebecque believed was at work in the poem as a whole. If evening of Day 6 comes for the Suitors and Penelope at the end of Book iv, therefore, it implicitly does so for Telemachos as well, and when Athena comes to Sparta to awaken him near dawn (esp. xv.50, 56), there is no reason to think it is any time other than further on in the same night during which his story was abandoned ten Books earlier (esp. iv.841).[22] He accordingly departs from Menelaos' palace early on what can only be his Day 7 (xv.182–4), spends that night with Diokles in Pherai (xv.185–8) and, after travelling most of the next day, his Day 8 (xv.189–93), and then setting sail immediately and continuing his trip all through the night (xv.284–300), arrives on Ithaca at dawn on his Day 9 (xv.495–7). When he returns to the palace on his Day 10 (xvii.1–30), therefore, he tells his mother that he heard Menelaos' report of Odysseus and came home (ταῦτα τελευτήσας νεόμην xvii.147–8), and this is a succinct but accurate

[20] At this point, my count of days begins to diverge radically from that of Delebecque (1958).

[21] Apthorp (1980) 3–4.

[22] Cf. Hölscher (1939) 2–3, 53–6. Austin (1969) 48–50, cites Hölscher, but argues that time simply does not exist for Telemachos while his father's story is being told, as if he were in a state of suspended animation for ten Books. This is slightly misleading, for Telemachos' story is merely dropped for a period of time and then picked up again more or less precisely where it left off.

account of his adventures (Table 3).[23] Although Penelope did inadvertently learn of his absence before she was intended to (iv.675–767), he has stuck faithfully to his original agenda (ii.373–6). Indeed, had he not been thrown into such a panic by Athena (xv.10–26; cf. xv.44–7, 59–66, 87–91) and stayed an additional night or two in Pylos, as everyone else in the poem clearly expects him to (xv.151–2, 199–201, 209–14), he would have been home almost exactly ten days after he left.[24]

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[23] Delebecque (1958) 26, argues that Telemachos' failure to mention a long sojourn in Sparta here is an evasive concealment of the time he wasted, but that is merely circular argument. If Telemachos says nothing of a month in Sparta, the only reasonable conclusion is that that month never existed outside of the modern scholarly imagination.

[24] Shewan (1926); Delebecque (1958); and Apthorp (1980) raise a series of objections to this short chronology of Telemachos' travels, but all are easily disposed of. *Pace* Delebecque 25, first of all, Athena's observation to Odysseus that his son obtained κλέος ἐσθλόν ('a good reputation') by going to Sparta (xiii.422–3) proves nothing about the length of his stay there. Nor does her insistence that Telemachos is 'sitting at his ease in the house of Menelaos' (xiii.423–4) imply he has been there for any particular length of time (*pace* Shewan 33; Apthorp 7). When Athena awakens the boy at the beginning of Book xv, moreover, nothing she says is obviously and openly a reproach (i.e. for not heading home quickly enough), and interpretations of her tone depend more on the presuppositions of the various critics than on hard-nosed *Wortphilologie*, as the radically opposed readings of Austin (1969) 50, and Apthorp (1980) 5–6, combine to make clear. Nor does Athena's insistence that Eurymachos' gifts and increasing pressure from Penelope's family have convinced her to marry (xv.16–8) mean Telemachos must have been abroad for an extended period of time (*pace* Delebecque 27; Apthorp 8). Indeed, the suddenness with which Penelope decides to take a husband in Book xix shows that such an abrupt about-face could easily happen in a day or two. ἤδη νῦν in Telemachos' request to Menelaos at xv.65 also contains no suggestion that he has been in Sparta for a long time (*pace* Shewan 32; Apthorp 6); as xvi.168; I.456; and XVI.844 make clear, the phrase is best translated not 'now at last' (Apthorp), but either 'right now, at this very moment' or simply 'come now!'. If Telemachos is extremely impatient to get off home (esp. xv.44–7, 59–66), that is only because he has been warned his property is unexpectedly at risk (esp. xv.19), not because he suddenly realizes he has been away for an unconscionably long time. Nor does Eumaios' subsequent report that Laertes has wasted away during the boy's absence (xvi.142–5) require that he be gone a month (*pace* Delebecque 27–8; Apthorp 8–9). Indeed, the old man's refusal not only to eat but to drink as well (xvi.143) would certainly have killed him, had Telemachos not come back much more quickly than that. As regards Antinoos' remarks at xvi.365–70, finally, it is impossible to tell from what he says whether the Suitors have lain in ambush for three nights or thirty (*pace* Shewan 32; Apthorp 8). The long chronology also creates its own set of problems, in that under it Telemachos leaves his companions for a full month on the beach in Pylos, despite his express statement in Book iv that he is anxious for them and therefore cannot stay too long in Sparta (iv.598–9). Delebecque (23) suggests Nestor entertains the crew in the meantime (cf. iii.423–4, 431–2), but this solution stumbles on the fact that they are on the beach when their leader finally returns (xv.217–21). Much more likely the invitation issued

Table 3: A 'Short' Chronology of Telemachos' Story

Day 1:	Feast with Suitors and encounter with Athena/Mentes on Ithaca (i.113–422); sleeps in his own room in the palace (i.425–44)
Day 2:	Assembly and preparations for journey abroad (ii.1–381); all-night voyage to Pylos (esp. ii.388–434)
Day 3:	In Pylos with Nestor (iii.4–394); night spent in the palace there (iii.397–9)
Day 4:	Sacrifice and meal in Pylos, followed by journey to Pherai (iii.404–89); night spent in Diokles' palace (iii.490)
Day 5:	Journey to Sparta; late dinner (cf. iii.497) with Menelaos and Helen (iii.491–iv.293); night spent in their palace (iv.294–303)
Day 6:	Menelaos' story and preparations for a feast (iv.306–624); awoken near dawn by Athena and urged to go home (xv.1–47)
Day 7:	Departure from Sparta and journey to Pherai (xv.143–87); night in Diokles' palace (xv.188)
Day 8:	Journey to Pylos and departure for Ithaca (xv.189–295); night spent at sea (xv.296–300)
Day 9:	Arrival off Ithaca at dawn (xv.495–7); journey inland to Eumaios' hut (xv.550–7) and reunion with Odysseus (xvi.11–321); night spent in hut (xvi.480–1; cf. 451–2)
Day 10:	Departure for the palace at dawn (xvii.1–30)

For all that one can tell from the text, therefore, Telemachos is abroad for only about a week and there is no "missing month" in Sparta and so no grounds for arguing that he either dilly-dallies or is inhospitably detained there.[25] Nor does Athena delay her mission to him for many days after Zeus gives her her orders (compare v.25–7 with xiii.412–5, 439–40; xv.1–43), but instead heads off there 'immediately,' which is to say she breaks into the boy's story more or less exactly where it left off, so that he is on his way home as quickly as possible the following morning. That a number of Odysseus-oriented days intervene in the larger tale is, in this connection at least, of no significance whatsoever. Athena's retrospective reference to Telemachos' adventures at v.18–20 must therefore be taken as a natural and reasonable concession to the realities of presenting an extended narrative in real time.[26] After Homer's audience have heard Books

in Book iii is for one day only and companions then return to their ship, where Telemachos meets them a few days later.

[25] The former is the thesis of Apthorp (1980), the latter that of Reece (1993) 71–99.

[26] For Athena's special status in the poem and her relationship to the narrator, see Chapters 7 and 10.

i–iv, after all, it is not self-evident that they can (or need to) be required to ignore that fact while they listen to v–xiv. All the same, the fact that Telemachos' story is 'in the past' in that sense does not mean it precedes his father's within the storyline itself. What all this leaves unexplained is the existence of remarkably similar divine Assemblies at the beginning of each of the poet's two, in one sense emphatically separate and independent narrative strands. The text of the *Odyssey* is as we have it and there is no way to demonstrate conclusively that, as Zielinski argued long ago, this peculiarity reflects the fact that the tales of Odysseus and his son were once coordinated and presumably parallel things which have been split apart. If it could be shown that Homer was capable of conceiving of two actions as simultaneous and of converting that conception into an apparently consecutive storyline, however, we would be one long step closer to making that thesis more plausible. Fortunately, there is considerable evidence within the text of the *Odyssey* itself to support the notion that the poet did frequently proceed in precisely that manner and was not systematic in disguising the fact. I begin with a short, relatively straightforward example and move on to others which are more complex but also more revealing.

At the beginning of Book i (Table 4), as the final preparations for a great feast are underway in Odysseus' house (i.109–12), Telemachos spies an anonymous visitor, actually Athena in disguise, standing before his door (i.113, 118). He quickly goes out to fetch her in (i.119–24) and leads her through the courtyard, where he and the others have been sitting (i.106–8, 114, 118), into the house (i.125–9). There he offers her a seat, the poet says, 'apart from the Suitors,' so as to prevent her being annoyed by their uproar and to make a private conversation possible (i.130–5, esp. 132–3). The two of them are then given washing-water and served dinner (i.136–43), and in the next verse the Suitors enter the hall and are themselves seated, allowed to wash and served (i.144–8). At i.149 the meal begins.[27] The action in this scene is thus presented in a consistently consecutive manner: first Athena and Telemachos enter the hall and are attended to and

[27] Precisely who begins eating at i.149 is not specified. As Homer leaves Telemachos and Athena with their meal sitting before them (i.139–43), however, it seems a reasonable conclusion that they are understood to be included in this general formula, especially since the poet then notes that it is the Suitors alone who begin to dance and sing when the meal is over (i.150–2).

served, and then the Suitors come in and are accorded the same treatment. The incident as a whole makes no sense whatsoever, however, for despite the fact that the Suitors are still outside when Telemachos and Athena enter the house (cf. i.144), he takes great care to sit apart from them (i.132–3), and all the preliminaries to the meal are carried out twice (i.130–43 parallel to 144–8) rather than once, as would normally be the case.[28] Although the action in the scene is presented sequentially, therefore, it has obviously been conceived as simultaneous: the feast is almost ready to be served at i.109–12, and in Homer's mind everyone enters the hall and is seated together, as Telemachos' otherwise inexplicable concern to sit apart from people who are not present yet makes clear. In the course of telling his story, the poet has broken it up into two separate strands which follow one after the other (approximately i.119–43 and i.144–8). Despite that fact, what goes on here clearly belongs in the following order:

Table 4: Simultaneous Action in i.109–49

1) After the final preparations for the meal are made (i.109–12),	
2) Telemachos and Athena enter the hall (i.125–9) and sit down (i.130–2),	
	3) as do the Suitors (i.144–5),
4) from whom Telemachos deliberately sits apart (i.132–5). He and Athena are given water and served (i.136–43),	
	5) as are the others (i.146–8),
6) and the meal begins (i.149).	

What one apparently sees here, therefore, is both Homer's original conception of his story and the way in which he worked with and transformed that conception into something he could tell, given what were presumably the constraints of his art and of his audience's powers of comprehension. This is very much the same process Zielinski argued was responsible for the appearance of two divine Assemblies in

[28] The odd character of the action here has been noted by Scott (1971), who does not draw out its full implications; see also Reece (1993) 51–3.

the *Odyssey*, but on a relatively modest scale. A more complex example of the same sort of thing and one which supplies a better parallel for what Zielinski argued was the structure of the epic as a whole occurs in the first half of Book xvii (Table 5).

On the day after he is reunited with his father, Telemachos sets off at a rapid pace sometime just after dawn to go from Eumaios' hut into the city (xvii.1–30; cf. xvi.270–1). Precisely how long he takes to make the journey is left unclear, although the distance is said to be fairly substantial (xvii.25).[29] At any rate, it is apparently sometime around mid-morning when he arrives at the palace, for preparations for the arrival of the Suitors are still underway there (xvii.32; cf. xvii.104–6), and when he comes to the agora, it is already full (cf. xvii.52–70, esp. 64–70). After spending an unspecified amount of time there (esp. xvii.68–70), Telemachos and Theoklymenos return to the palace (xvii.84), where they have a bath (xvii.85–90) and a meal (xvii.91–5, 98) and take part in a conversation with Penelope (xvii.99–166). The poet now announces that the Suitors, many of whom were in the Assembly-place earlier (xvii.65–7), are gathered outside the house (xvii.167–9). Eventually it is time for the mid-day meal (δείπνηστος xvii.170), as animals are brought in from the countryside by the usual herdsmen (xvii.170–1) and slaughtered (xvii.180–1), and the feast prepared (xvii.182).

A number of hours have thus obviously gone by since dawn at xvii.1. At this point, Homer turns his attention back to the pig-farm, where Eumaios announces to the Stranger that the day is well-advanced and that it will be evening soon (xvii.190–1). This is more or less consistent with what has been going on in the city, where it must be at least noon by now, but this apparent consistency introduces serious problems into the narrative. At the beginning of the Book, first of all, Odysseus says he wants to wait to leave for town until the sun is fully up (xvii.22–3), but he and Eumaios have lingered far beyond that point, although why they should have done so is never explained. When they are finally just outside the city, moreover, they cross paths with the goatherd Melanthios, who is driving in animals for the Suitors' banquet (δεῖπνον xvii.212–4). There would

[29] Note also that on the previous day Eumaios is sent into town sometime around mid- to late-morning (xvi.130–1) and only returns at dusk (xvi.452–3), despite not having dallied along the way (esp. xvi.465–7; cf. xvi.132–4, 150–1, 340–1).

be nothing exceptional about this (cf. xiv.105–6), except for the fact that the animals intended for that purpose are explicitly said to have arrived at the palace some forty lines earlier, along with their herdsmen (xvii.170–1), and this ought to have been at least an hour or two ago, since Eumaios and Odysseus have made their long, slow walk in from the countryside (cf. xvii.25) in the meantime. So too comparison with the action on the next day makes it clear that Melanthios' arrival in town belongs sometime around mid-morning (xx.122–240, esp. 173–6).[30] By the time he reaches the house in Book xvii, however, the meat has already been roasted and carved (xvii.258) and the goats he brought with him, ostensibly for this very purpose, drop abruptly out of the narrative. Likewise, although Odysseus and Eumaios leave the hut much later than intended and after the meat for the Suitors' banquet is already being prepared (xvii.170–82), the smell of roasting fat is still in the air when they arrive outside the door (xvii.270).

There is thus something very peculiar about the internal chronology of the first half of Book xvii, and the problem seems to have to do with the consecutive nature of the action. Odysseus and Eumaios ought to leave the farm sometime in the early morning as planned (xvii.22–3), take a few hours along the way, given the rough condition of the road (cf. xvii.196, 204) and the Stranger's age and broken-down condition (cf. xvii.202–3), and arrive in town sometime around mid-day, when the begging for food should be at its best. Instead, they leave much later than intended but still manage to appear while the Suitors' feast is underway.[31] Melanthios too is several hours behind what ought to be his proper schedule, however, and it thus seems clear that Homer has displaced this entire second set of events from its proper location in the narrative in order to create a consecutive storyline. As originally conceived, therefore, this section of the tale must have proceeded in approximately the following order:

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[30] Note also xxi.265–6, where Antinoos suggests that Melanthios be ordered to begin driving in goats to the city the next day at dawn (ἠῶθεν), and xvii.600, where Telemachos gives similar instructions to Eumaios.

[31] Note also how Iros, although a professional beggar and a glutton (xviii.1–3), comes to the feast so late in the day (esp. xvii.606) that his place by the door is already occupied (xviii.8–13) and the Suitors have long since stopped eating (xvii.605–6).

Table 5: Simultaneous Action in xvii.1–338

1) Telemachos sets off for town at dawn (xvii.1–27),	
	2) and after the sun is fully up, Odysseus and Eumaios follow him in (xvii.182–203; cf. xvii.22–3).
3) Once in town (xvii.28), Telemachos goes about his various business there (xvii.29–166).	
	4) Melanthios and his goats and herdsman meet Odysseus and Eumaios at the spring; he curses them and quickly enters the city (xvii.204–55).
5) When the animals arrive, they are sacrificed and a feast prepared (xvii.170–1, 180–2).	
	6) Odysseus and Eumaios arrive as the meal is winding down (esp. xvii.269–71),
7) and eventually Odysseus enters the hall (xvii.336–8), where his son is sitting.	

In this case, Homer has been fairly careful to make the surface changes necessary to render his narrative consecutive, in particular by allowing Eumaios to say as the second strand begins that it is now late in the day (xvii.190–1). He has not been thorough-going in his revisions, however, and as a result there is a certain amount of incoherence in his tale. The action in the middle of Book xxi has been even less systematically adapted (Table 6).

When Eumaios and Philoitios burst into tears at the sight of Odysseus' bow and thus the prospect that Penelope will remarry (xxi.82–3), Antinoos orders them either to sit down in silence or go outside (xxi.89–90). What they do is not specified. Instead, Telemachos approves the contest (esp. xxi.106–17), sets up the axes (xxi.118–23) and nearly strings the bow himself, although he is restrained at the last moment by Odysseus (xxi.124–39). The Suitors then begin to

take their turns (cf. xxi.141–3) and prove universally incapable of the task (xxi.184–5); only Eurymachos and Antinoos hold back (xxi.186–7). At this point, Homer reports that Eumaios and Philoitios come out together into the courtyard (xxi.188–9), followed separately by Odysseus (xxi.190). He tests their loyalty one final time and then identifies himself (xxi.193–221), after which a long round of joyous wailing and a brief strategy-session ensue (xxi.222–41). At last they return to the hall (xxi.242–4), where Eurymachos is turning the bow about in his hands, warming it and attempting to fit it with a string (xxi.245–7); Antinoos has apparently not yet made his try.

The reunion in the courtyard thus seems to follow at least the initial stages of the contest of the bow within, and Homer covers the scene outside to some extent by implying that the Suitors' efforts went on for a considerable length of time (esp. xxi.184–5; note the imperfects). All the same, there are once again peculiarities in the story as it stands. The action inside the hall, first of all, essentially freezes for sixty lines between xxi.186–7, where Eurymachos and Antinoos are holding back as the other Suitors fail, and xxi.245–7, where Eurymachos at last has the bow in his hands. Nor is it immediately clear why Eumaios and Philoitios wait to leave the hall until xxi.188–9, a hundred lines after they have been ordered out (xxi.89–90), or why they go out together, or why Odysseus comes out separately after them. All these difficulties vanish if we assume Homer is once again using a consecutive style to describe what he conceived as two simultaneous actions. The exit of Eumaios and Philoitios is carefully prepared for and motivated by Antinoos' outburst at xxi.89–90, after all, and it is at this point that they ought to go out together into the courtyard. Odysseus, on the other hand, must remain inside a bit longer, since he is there to stop Telemachos from stringing the bow (xxi.129), and he accordingly comes out separately after them.[32] As the poet first thought out the scene, therefore, Eumaios and Philoitios are already in the courtyard as Telemachos sets up the axes and makes his attempt at the bow (xxi.118–39) and are subsequently joined there by Odysseus (xxi.190). Their apparently extended (xxi.226–7) reunion thus takes place as the lesser Suitors pass the bow about their circle and fail to string it while their leaders hold

[32] Odysseus may well wait to exit separately in order to avoid arousing suspicion (cf. xxi.230–1, 242–4), of course, but that does not explain the larger questions the scene poses.

back (approx. xxi.140–87). When the hero and his servants finally return to the hall (xxi.242–4), Eurymachos is about to take his turn (xxi.245–7), and at this point Homer brings the two divided halves of his scene together. Once consecutive appearances are set aside, that is to say, it seems clear that the incident was conceived (and perhaps intended to be understood) as follows:

Table 6: Simultaneous Action in xxi.80–247

1) When Penelope brings in the bow, Eumaios and Philoitios begin to cry (xxi.82–3); Antinoos orders them to be quiet or leave (xxi.89–90),	
	2) and they go out (xxi.188–9).
3) Telemachos then approves and arranges the contest, but is stopped from stringing the bow by his father (xxi.106–39),	
	4) who then exits into the courtyard (xxi.190).
5) All the Suitors but Antinoos and Eurymachos try the bow but fail (xxi.140–87),	
	6) while Odysseus and his herdsmen are reunited and make their plans (xxi.191–241).
7) As they go back in again (xxi.242–4), Eurymachos is finally taking his turn with the bow (xxi.245–7).	

As these examples combine to make apparent, there is an essentially consecutive element in the narrative style of the *Odyssey*, but the poet nonetheless frequently conceives of events as simultaneous and subsequently translates them so that they appear to follow one after the other. Fortunately, he generally does so in a sufficiently superficial way that the original relationship between the various actions can still be detected. On occasion, he does not do even that. I offer three further examples, beginning once again on a small scale and moving on to larger and more blatant cases.

Toward the end of Book xvii, Odysseus begins to make his way

around the hall, begging from all the Suitors in turn (xvii.365–6), until Antinoos throws a footstool which strikes him on the shoulder (xvii.462–3). Odysseus contains himself (xvii.463–5) and makes his way back to the threshold, where he sits down with his bag of scraps, now full (xvii.466–7; cf. xvii.367, 450–2), and offers an evil wish for the man who has abused him (xvii.475–6). Antinoos responds by telling him to be quiet and threatening him with even worse violence (xvii.478–80), and ignores the other young men, who express shock and horror at what he has done and said (xvii.481–8). At least a few minutes have thus gone by since the footstool was thrown. At this point, however, Homer abruptly switches his attention to the women's quarters up above and says that when Penelope heard the Stranger struck (τοῦ δ' ὡς ἤκουσε . . ./ βλημένου), she began to speak among her slave-women and prayed for the death of the aggressor (xvii.492–4). That Penelope can hear what goes on in the hall below is a commonplace in the poem (i.328–42; xvii.541–5; xx.387–9; cf. xxi.235–9, 381–5; xxiii.40–2) and the obvious implication is that Homer has quite openly moved back one small step in time here.[33] At xvii.505–6, therefore, as his wife ceases to speak, Odysseus is still eating the food he set down by his feet some forty lines earlier (xvii.466–7; cf. xvii.478).[34]

This is a relatively limited, small-scale example of open simultaneity in the *Odyssey* and may seem less than earth-shaking. A larger and more significant instance of the same sort of narrative technique occurs toward the end of Book xv and the beginning of xvi. After his day's journey from Pherai to Pylos (xv.189–93; cf. iii.491–iv.2), Telemachos sets sail for Ithaca toward evening, so that darkness comes upon him while he is at sea (xv.287–300, esp. 296). At this point Homer turns his attention to Eumaios and Odysseus, who are having their evening meal in the hut (xv.301–2; cf. xv.392–6), and to the swineherd's long

[33] Although xvii.492–3 could be taken 'when she heard about him being struck' (cf. xi.458; xvi.301), nothing in the text suggests someone has brought a message to Penelope about events downstairs. For a more likely parallel, cf. XXII.405–47 (briefly discussed by Bassett [1938] 35), where only at XXII.447 does Andromache hear the cries of lamentation for Hektor which began at XXII.405–9 and oppressed the entire city.

[34] A similar transformation of conceived simultaneity into consecutive narrative probably lies behind the oddly disjointed action at xv.144–50, where Menelaos appears in front of the chariot of Telemachos and Peisistratos with a libation only after they have driven out of his forecourt. Gunn (1970) 194–7, offers a similar explanation; Rose (1971) rather overstates the extent of Menelaos' personal obtuseness.

autobiographical tale (xv.403–84) which, together with other similar talk, lasts all through the night (xv.493–4). The two men then sleep very briefly for, Homer remarks, 'straightaway well-throned dawn came' (xv.494–5). xv.495 is a divided verse, in the second half of which Telemachos and his companions arrive off the island (xv.495–7). One thus assumes it is dawn for them as well, particularly since we know from Book iii that it is a full night's sail from Pylos to Ithaca[35] and because they immediately get out of their boat and prepare a meal rather than going to sleep, as Homer's characters do when they land in a place by night (e.g. ix.142–51; xii.1–7).

Homer thus begins the process of weaving the two major strands of his story together by cutting back and forth between them, using Eumaios' tale to fill up the otherwise featureless time of Telemachos' nighttime voyage.[36] By xv.495 it is the same time (dawn) in the same place (Ithaca) in both stories and the two would seem to be ready to integrate into a single temporal structure. All the same, there is no question of purely sequential action here. After the meal on the beach (xv.500), Telemachos speaks with Theoklymenos and Peiraios about where the former will stay on Ithaca and sees the sign of Apollo's hawk (xv.509–46), after all of which he finally sets off on foot to Eumaios' hut (xv.550–2, 555–7). Clearly some finite if unspecifiable amount of time has passed for him since the sun first rose, and it must take still more time in addition for him to make his way to the pig-farm in the hills (cf. xiv.1–3). Immediately after setting him on his way, however, Homer reports that 'at the same time as dawn' (ἅμ' ἠοῖ) Odysseus and Eumaios lit a fire, prepared a morning meal and sent the other herdsmen away (xvi.1–3).[37] Clearly the poet has simply picked up their story where he left it at xv.494–5, and there can be little doubt that the hustle and bustle in the swineherd's hut

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[35] The original voyage from Ithaca to Pylos begins somewhat later in the evening than this one, since there the sun sets before Telemachos and his companions have put out to sea or even collected their provisions (ii.388; cf. ii.410–5), whereas here they have already completed part of the journey when night comes on (xv.289–97). Although in Book xv they arrive on Ithaca with the first light, therefore, in Book iii it is apparently several hours into the day when they come upon the Pylians (ii.434–iii.5), who are in the middle of a banquet (iii.5–9). Clearly the basic sense in the poem is that it is slightly more than one night's sail from one place to the other.

[36] Cf. Page (1955) 67–8; Apthorp (1980) 3.

[37] The clear implication of xv.494–5 is that they awake at that point, and there is accordingly no mention at xvi.1–3 of their rising. I take ἐνίαυεν at xv.557 to be an iterative imperfect, describing Eumaios' normal practice (cf. xiv.524–33) rather than what he is doing at this particular moment.

is to be understood as going on at the same time as Telemachos' own meal on the shore and his walk inland (esp. xv.500, 555–7).[38] The stories of Odysseus and his son are still formally independent, unintegrated things here and what we are seeing is the process by means of which Homer gradually eases them up against one another. Were he fundamentally leery of simultaneous action, he could simply have avoided the reference to dawn at xvi.2 and allowed Odysseus and Eumaios to prepare their breakfast at some vague, unspecified time in early morning. Instead, he seems to be making a deliberate effort to show what is going on in the two halves of his tale at exactly the same time, presumably in order to bring them together in as precise and compelling a dovetail as possible (xvi.11–2). Once again, therefore, there is openly simultaneous action in the *Odyssey*. My final example (Table 7) is on an even larger scale and considerably more blatant.

When Odysseus awakes at dawn on the morning after the murder of the Suitors (xxiii.345–9), he warns Penelope that as soon as the sun is up (ἅμ' ἠελίῳ ἀνιόντι), a rumor about the killings will spread throughout the city (xxiii.362–3). Once the light of day is full, therefore, he, Telemachos and their loyal herdsmen make their way out to his estate in the country (xxiii.366–72, esp. 371). Precisely how long it takes them to get there is once again not clear, but this is wild, unsettled land which Odysseus and his family are actively reclaiming (xxiv.206–7; cf. xiv.1–12), rather than a prize portion like Alkinoos' τέμενος just outside the Phaeacians' city-walls (vi.293–4), and the farm is thus presumably some considerable distance out of town.[39] Once he and his companions arrive there, at any rate, Odysseus orders the others to sacrifice a pig for δεῖπνον (normally 'the mid-day meal') while he goes off to look for his father (xxiv.214–6). By the time the two of them return, the meat is being cut up and wine mixed (xxiv.362–4), and after the old man has been bathed and dressed (xxiv.365–7), the feast begins (xxiv.384–6). At this point Dolios and his sons arrive from the work they have been doing elsewhere (xxiv.386–8; cf. xxiv.222–5), having been fetched by the same

[38] The only alternative is to argue that we somehow step back in time at xv.495, but this is equally contrary to Delebecque's theory while simultaneously conflicting with the obvious sense of the text.

[39] xxiv.205 (τάχα δ' ἀγρὸν ἵκοντο) is so formular as to offer little assistance on this matter.

old woman who washed Laertes (xxiv.388–90), presumably after she finished with him, and all the men sit down together to eat (xxiv.408–12). The conclusion that it is by now at least late morning seems all but inescapable. At xxiv.413–4, however, Homer turns his attention back to the city and reports that Rumor makes her way about announcing the death of the Suitors and that after the Ithacans recover the bodies of the dead (xxiv.415–7), an Assembly is held (xxiv.420–62). Rumor's mission has been specifically scheduled by Odysseus for dawn (xxiii.362–3), and in the *Odyssey* Assemblies routinely occur first thing in the morning (ii.1–8; viii.1–18; x.187–8; cf. vi.48–55). Barely has Eupeithes finished his speech (xxiv.422–37), moreover, than Medon and Phemios arrive, having just woken up (xxiv.439–41).[40] Clearly we are back at the beginning of the day again and Homer has made no effort to disguise the non-Delebecquian manner in which he has handled time.[41] The Ithacans now make their preparations and march out to the country (xxiv.463–9); by the time they arrive at Odysseus' farm, however, the meal in progress at xxiv.412 is just coming to an end (xxiv.489–93). These are thus quite openly simultaneous storylines, and in the final battle Homer brings them together to close his epic (xxiv.493–548). Despite the consecutive style, therefore, the conceived order of events is approximately as follows:

Table 7: Simultaneous Action in xxiii.347–xxiv.548

1) Odysseus awakes at dawn (xxiii.347–9), and Athena hides him and the others in darkness as they head out to the country with the day (xxiii.370–2), so that they are not seen by	
	2) the other Ithacans, who learn of the killings as

[40] It is no good arguing that Medon and Phemios slept in after celebrating Penelope's (re)marriage (cf. xxiii.142–7), since even when Homer's characters stay up late into the night, they rise at dawn regardless (esp. xv.493–5; cf. iv.306–10; xiii.17–9), and the previous night was an abnormally long one in any case (xxiii.241–6).

[41] I ought to note again (cf. n. 10, above) that Delebecque believed Book xxiv was not part of Homer's *Odyssey*, so that even had he noticed the simultaneous nature of the action here, it would not have caused him to question his overall thesis.

	soon as the sun rises and come to get their dead (xxiv.413–7; cf. xxiii.362–3). They then hold an Assembly (xxiv.420–62) and make preparations to march out to Odysseus' estate (xxiv.463–9).
3) Meanwhile, Odysseus is reunited with his father (xxiv.216–360) and a meal is eaten (esp. xxiv. 384–6, 408–12), at the end of which (xxiv.489–93)	

4) the Ithacan forces appear, battle is joined, and peace finally made (xxiv.493–548).

Two points should by now be clear. First, Delebecque's 40-day scheme is unworkable and must be rejected. Up through the beginning of Book xvi, at least on the surface of the text, Homer is not telling a single, chronologically unified tale, but two essentially separate stories, and Telemachos accordingly hurries home as soon as he gets word from Menelaos about his father, and arrives on Ithaca after having been gone from there for only about a week. Athena does, as usual, encourage him to act and in fact gives him very specific directions as to what he is to do and when, although once again without explaining the real nature of his situation to him (xv.10–42; cf. i.269–302). He for his part remains eager to adopt her suggestions (esp. xv.44–7, 59–66, 87–91), but still behaves on occasion in a slightly awkward fashion (e.g. xv.193–214) and, once he learns his mother has not remarried during his absence (xvi.31–9; cf. xv.14–8), can again see no way out of his situation (xvi.122–8 = i.245–51). Second and equally important, Homer seems to have a pronounced general tendency to imagine several actions as going on simultaneously, although he often converts these conceptions (not always in a careful or systematic manner) into a consecutive form. It is thus entirely possible that Zielinski was right to argue that Homer originally thought of the stories of Telemachos and Odysseus as going on at the same time and that the twin Assemblies of the gods in Books i and v reflect a typically somewhat awkward adaptation of that initial conception. The chronology of Odysseus' adventures in Books v–xvii may

offer one further tenuous bit of evidence in support of that hypothesis.

Book v begins with dawn and the second council of the gods (esp. v.1–4), from which Hermes is dispatched to Ogygia (v.28–58). Odysseus spends that night with Kalypso (v.226–7) and on the next day (the second day of his story) begins to build his raft (v.228–61). Homer says that this takes four days and that on the fifth he puts to sea (v.262–3), that on the eighteenth day of his voyage he spies Scheria and is shipwrecked (v.278–80), and that he drifts for two more nights and days (v.388–9), sees land on the third morning (v.390–3) and finally comes to shore (v.441–63). All these carefully enumerated days of shipbuilding, travel and floating at sea stretch Odysseus' story out to considerable length, and as a result it appears he washes up in the land of the Phaeacians sometime on his 25th day, or on what Delebecque (who places the beginning of Book v on Day 7 of a unified chronology) calls "Day 31." As Delebecque also points out, however, many of these nominal days are purely formulaic and thus in a certain sense unreal. They count in the narrative (cf. vi.170; vii.267–8) and it is even possible that some of those in Homer's original audience kept track of them, but they are really nothing more than empty words and numbers.[42] If we focus instead on the story's regular, repeated pattern of dawns and dusks, intriguing possibilities emerge (Table 8).

If we take the day on which Hermes visits Ogygia to be Odysseus' Day 1, the hero begins to build his raft on his Day 2. Although four formular days of work (v.262–3) and eighteen similarly empty days of sailing (v.278–80) follow, the next explicit night in the poem is the one which appears with Poseidon's storm (v.294). Let us accordingly take Delebecque's suggestion about the essential meaninglessness of all these intervening days seriously, if for the sake of argument alone, and identify this as Odysseus' Night 2. Two more featureless days and nights (which we will also ignore) follow (v.388–9), and the next explicit dawn is at v.390. This is thus, on our hypothetical count at least, the beginning of Odysseus' Day 3, and the night he spends huddled under the olive trees on the beach (v.464–vi.2) and during which Athena visits Nausikaa (vi.2–47) is accordingly only the third 'real' night of his story. On the next morning (Odysseus' Day 4) Nausicaa goes washing (esp. vi.48–59) and at dusk brings the stranger

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42 Delebecque (1958) 14. Cf. Taplin (1992) 15–8, on the fourteen days of actual narrated events in the *Iliad*.

she has found to the outskirts of the city (vi.321–2). That night he meets Arete and Alkinoos and sleeps in their palace (esp. vii.344–5). His Day 5 is occupied with an Assembly, games and feasting (viii), and the night is given over to an account of his Wanderings (ix–xii). His Day 6 is spent in further feasting (esp. xiii.24–35) and he sleeps that night aboard the Phaeacian ship (esp. xiii.73–80, 117–9), awakening in his native land sometime early on his Day 7 (xiii.187–8; cf. xiii.93–5). He spends that night (his Night 7) and the next (his Night 8) in Eumaios' hut (xiv.457–523; xv.301–494), and is reunited with Telemachos early on his Day 9 (xvi). On his Day 10, he makes his way to the palace (xvii.182–341).

Table 8: A 'Short' Chronology of Odysseus' Story

Day 1:	Hermes to Ogygia with order for Odysseus' release (v.28–58); night in cave with Kalypso (v.226–7)
Day 2:	Raft-building (v.228–61) ['four days' at v.262–3 ignored]; departure from Ogygia and voyage (v.264–77) ['seventeen days' at v.278–80 ignored]; storm bringing night (v.282–96, esp. 294) ['two nights and days' at v.388–9 ignored]
Day 3:	Sight of land at dawn while adrift at sea (v.390–3); landing by river's mouth (v.441–63); night spent under olive trees (v.464–vi.2, esp. v.466)
Day 4:	Encounter with Nausikaa late in day (vi.110–320); arrival at Athena's grove at dusk (vi.321–2); night and evening in Alkinoos' palace (vi.136–347, esp. 137–8, 344–5)
Day 5:	Assembly, games and feasts (viii); Odysseus' stories last long into the night (ix–xii, esp. xi.330–1); second night in Alkinoos' palace (cf. xiii.17)
Day 6:	Feasting (xiii.24–35); departure for Ithaca with evening (esp. xiii.31–9); sleeps onboard ship (xiii.73–80, 117–9)
Day 7:	Awakes on Ithacan beach (xiii.187–8); encounter with Eumaios and night in hut (esp. xiv.523)
Day 8:	Second night in hut (esp. xv.494)
Day 9:	Early morning reunion with Telemachos (esp. xvi.1–12); third night in hut (xvi.480–1)
Day 10:	Return to palace sometime around mid-day (esp. xvii.190–1)

If we discount Odysseus' eighteen days of sailing and other similarly empty figures, therefore, his story contains precisely the same number of days and nights as that of Telemachos (Table 3) and the two come together neatly on the morning of what is for both Day 9. This is all quite speculative, and I accordingly wish to stress that none of my earlier conclusions depend in any way upon it. The

coincidence is nonetheless suggestive, particularly given the presence in the poem of the doubled (or repeated) Assembly of the gods in Books i and v, which in both stories falls on Day 1, and Homer's apparent general tendency to work in precisely this manner. Two other considerations might also be taken to lend support to the thesis.

In both strands of what I have tentatively reconstructed as Homer's original conception of his story, first of all, Athena is initially present at an Assembly of the gods (i.26–102; v.1–42), which may in fact be a single scene divided somewhat crudely into two. In Book i she descends from Olympos to Ithaca, where she spends the rest of the day in the company of Telemachos (i.103–320); on Odysseus' Day 1 she is not seen again, and it is Hermes who goes off on the mission to Ogygia.[43] On Day 2 of Telemachos' story Athena meets the boy on the beach after the Assembly has broken up and spends the afternoon gathering a crew for their voyage to Pylos (ii.267–96, 382–7). Toward evening (ii.388) the two of them board the ship and put to sea (ii.416–33); she is not present at all in Day 2 of Odysseus' story. On Day 3 of Telemachos' story Athena is present during the interview with Nestor in Pylos (iii.4–372), but vanishes toward dusk (iii.371–2; cf. iii.329) and at some point in the same night (Night 3) in Odysseus' story appears to Nausikaa on Scheria (vi.2–42). On Day 4 she is at the sacrifice in her honor in Nestor's palace in the morning in Telemachos' story (iii.435–6), and in the evening of that same day in the other story speaks to Odysseus outside the Phaeacian city (vii.14–81). On Odysseus' next day (Day 5) she disguises herself first as Alkinoos' herald (viii.7–15) and later as a judge at the games (viii.193–8); she does not appear in Telemachos' story at all. On Day 6 she is not active in either strand. On Telemachos' Day 7, however, she appears to him a bit before dawn in Sparta (xv.1–43); she also meets Odysseus on the beach in Ithaca at some point in the morning of that day (xiii.189–440).[44] Athena does act from afar on a

[43] The division of labor between herself and Hermes which Athena proposes at i.84–95 does not in one sense prove their missions were originally conceived as simultaneous, since she is allegedly afraid to oppose Poseidon openly until Odysseus is back on Ithaca (vi.329–31; xiii.341–3) and therefore cannot undertake the embassy to Kalypso in any case. From another perspective, however, one might argue that Homer invented this fear specifically in order to justify Athena's decision to visit Ithaca rather than Ogygia.

[44] On this level in the text, therefore, events in Book xv take place one day earlier (rather than later) than those in Book xiii; see below.

few other occasions in both parts of the narrative as a sort of *deus ex machina* or literary conceit, pouring down grace on someone or the like from a distance without actually breaking physically into the action (e.g. ii.12; iv.795–801; v.382–7, 436–7). Her movements as a whole, however, are compatible with the thesis that in an original ten-day 'simultaneous' chronology she moved rapidly but logically from one storyline to the other, never appearing physically in one at the same time she was present in the other.[45] When the two tales were peeled apart in performance, which is to say when they were placed in consecutive style, therefore, her behavior continued to reflect the poet's original conception of his story (Table 9).

One other small bit of evidence bears on this question, and that is the apparent problem with the internal chronology of Book xv with which I began this chapter. In one sense the 'extra day' Telemachos' story contains is not significant since, on the surface of the text at least, his tale is still chronologically independent of his father's at that point. Given that Homer is beginning the process of weaving his two narrative lines together, as his unusual and otherwise unnecessary use of simultaneous time at the end of Book xv and the beginning of xvi makes clear, however, he could have done so a bit more neatly had he granted Odysseus one additional night in Eumaios' hut, if only by including it in the summary account of events at xvii.515–6. Instead, he has allowed Telemachos' story to occupy four days in the same block of text in which his father's can accommodate only three, and if one accepts the hypothetical ten-day scheme I have outlined above, a plausible explanation of this otherwise peculiar decision emerges. At the beginning of Book xv, Telemachos is 'behind' Odysseus by a full twenty-four hours, in that it is still his Day 6 but his father's Day 7. In the course of the Book, therefore, as he makes his way to Pylos via Pherai from Sparta (xv.182–93; cf. iii.481–iv.2), where Homer has chosen to leave him, he 'catches up' and as a result, when he finally sails into Ithaca, his tale and Odysseus' are in perfect chronological synchronization.[46]

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[45] Note in particular how in Book v it is Ino/Leukothea who appears physically to Odysseus during the storm (v.333–53), while Athena (who is otherwise occupied at this point in a combined short chronology) acts in his favor only from afar (v.382–7, 436–7).

[46] Telemachos' decision not to visit Nestor a second time (xv.194–216) is thus motivated not only by a reasonable fear that the garrulous old man will detain him longer than he would like, but also by the poet's concern for his chronology: if

Table 9: Athena's Movements in a Hypothetical Combined Short Chronology of the Stories of Telemachos and Odysseus

	Telemachos		*Odysseus*
Day 1:	Assembly of the gods (i.26–102); then on Ithaca (i.103–320)	=	Assembly of the gods (v.1–42)
Day 2:	On Ithaca (ii.267–96, 382–429)		—
Day 3:	In Pylos until evening (iii.4–372)		—
	—		During the night, appears to Nausikaa (vi.2–42)
Day 4:	At sacrifice in Nestor's palace (iii.435–6)		—
	—		In evening, appears to Odysseus outside city (vii.14–81)
Day 5:	—		In morning, appears disguised as herald (viii.7–15) and then as judge of games (viii.193–8)
Day 6:	—		—
Day 7:	Before dawn, appears to Telemachos (xv.1–43)		—
	—		In morning, meets with Odysseus on beach (xiii.189–440)
Day 8:	—		—
Day 9:	Appears outside Eumaios' hut and arranges reunion of father and son (xvi.155–77)		

Whether this final stage of my argument is correct or not (and decisive proof that it is is certainly impossible), there can be little doubt that Homer's treatment of time is far more complex and nuanced than has generally been recognized. Despite appearances, the *Odyssey* balances uneasily between simultaneous and consecutive action. The tale occasionally splits and then falls back together; individual storylines break off only to resume abruptly thousands of lines later, with no time having passed for the characters involved; larger strands are knit together in careful and often very subtle ways. The more imme-

Telemachos spends a night or two in Pylos, his story will once again be out of kilter with his father's, and it is accordingly better to pack him off to Ithaca immediately.

diate implication is that there can be little doubt Telemachos returns to Ithaca as quickly as he can and should. He is precisely who and what he has been since the poem began, and his situation has not altered: what he needs is for his father to return to recreate the past and free him from the horrors of the present. Nor is he the only one.

CHAPTER SIX

EUMAIOS THE SWINEHERD

When Odysseus returns to Ithaca, he meets up first not with his son, but with the swineherd Eumaios (esp. xiii.404–11).[1] Like Telemachos before him, Eumaios is from first to last a decent and honorable, if not precisely heroic individual, trapped in a desperate situation which he is unable to correct or escape on his own. He too needs and longs for the return of Odysseus, which alone can set him free and which has come to stand in his mind for the restoration of all that is good and lost in the world. The tales he and his anonymous guest trade over the next two days are in the first instance a further telling example of how Homer's characters use stories and in particular stories of Odysseus to comment on and control their world and one another. At the same time and perhaps more important, Eumaios' personal tale of woe and exile (xv.403–84) raises a series of difficult and disturbing questions about the likely character of his master's return to Ithaca, as well as about the nature of human (particularly male) existence and what is to be done about it.

Eumaios is characterized from the first as a good and faithful servant, who loves Odysseus and his family deeply (e.g. xiii.405–6; xiv.144; xvi.12–26) and has done his best with the enterprise over which he has been given responsibility.[2] Indeed, Homer's opening description of the pig-farm stresses not only the elaborate nature of the complex, but also the extent to which the swineherd's independent efforts have

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[1] On Eumaios and his relationship with the disguised Odysseus, see most recently Rose (1980); Roisman (1990); Reece (1993) 145–63. Odysseus' συβώτης is referred to once early on (iv.640) in such a casual way that it seems possible he is a well-established character in the story (thus Woodhouse [1930] 194–8, followed by Stanford [1958–59], and West, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth [1988] ad loc.). His name (for which, see Mühlestein [1984] 148–53), on the other hand, is mentioned for the first time only at xiv.55, after he has been referred to repeatedly and carefully characterized (esp. xiii.404–6; xiv.3–4, 33–52), and may thus (*pace* Hoekstra, in Heubeck and Hoekstra [1989] ad xiv.55) be less traditional than he is himself; cf. the sensible remarks of Combellack (1962) 194–6; (1976) 44–9. For the seemingly extravagant epithets attached to Eumaios' name, see Bonnafé (1984).

[2] Cf. Race (1993) 95–6.

created it (xiv.5–14, 21–2).[3] He has thus enriched his master greatly (esp. xiv.65–6; cf. xv.371–2), and he shows himself ready to defend the property with his own person that very night by sleeping outside despite the bitter cold to protect the animals from raiders (xiv.524–33). None of this should be mistaken for entirely selfless behavior. Eumaios has always worked in expectation of a reward (xiv.62–7) and is in any case also laboring for himself, to the extent that he refers at one point to the pigs and the farm as 'my livelihood' (ἐμὸν βίοτον xvii.593–4). Indeed, he has managed to construct what seems to be a relatively comfortable life for himself in the country (cf. xiv.449–52), in that the other men do most of the actual herding, while he stays 'on guard' back at the hut all day (xiv.23–8; xvi.3; cf. xv.395–400; xvii.593), and when the poet first catches sight of him, he is accordingly not (e.g.) enlarging the complex of buildings or caring for the piglets, but making himself a new pair of sandals (xiv.23–4). All the same, he has worked hard and made the best of the hand life has dealt him (cf. xv.371–3), and under normal circumstances could now expect a 'house and land and a much-courted wife' as a reward for his industry (xiv.62–6). Because Odysseus has disappeared, however, it seems less and less likely that there will be any such ideally happy end to his story. Instead, he and the farm are under constant, destructive pressure from the Suitors, who have taken effective control of his animals and begun to reduce their numbers drastically (e.g. xiv.17–9, 26–8, 108), and Eumaios' grief and resentment at this horrible turn of events is so profound and all-pervasive that it seems to pour out of him virtually every time he speaks (e.g. xiv.39–44, 59–71, 80–108). In particular, he resents his new, genuinely servile position vis-à-vis the young men occupying Odysseus' halls (esp. xiv.59–61, 80–1) and is deeply grieved by the fact that his master is apparently lost to him forever (e.g. xiv.40–1, 67–9, 138–44), and on this basis he draws a constant, bitter contrast between what seem to function for him as two radically opposed archetypes of human behavior: the Suitors are feasting at their ease at home, while Odysseus is hungry and in exile if alive at all (xiv.41–4); the Suitors are a source of terror and impoverishment to him, while Odysseus was loving and generous (xiv.58–67); the Suitors are the shameless, wasteful consumers of another man's animals,

[3] On the physical description of the farm and what it says about Eumaios, see Austin (1975) 165–8.

while Odysseus accumulated the largest herds of any Achaian hero (xiv.81–108).[4] Behind these complaints lurks Eumaios' strong sense that he too has been cheated out of what he deserves: Odysseus is hungry while the Suitors feast, just as he himself has been reduced to eating scraps (xiv.80–1); Odysseus is stranded far from home (xiv.43) and he too has given up going to the city (xiv.372–3); Odysseus' wealth is being consumed by the Suitors (xiv.81–106) and his own is as well (xiv.107–8).

The pressure of time is thus on Eumaios just as it is on Telemachos and Penelope as Homer's story begins (e.g. i.245–51), for while he still has many pigs left (xiv.13–6, 20), their numbers are diminishing rapidly and it seems that the end of his enterprise and thus of his livelihood and his hope of a reward is relatively near (xiv.16–9, 92–108). Despite all this, he is immensely hospitable to the decrepit old beggar (cf. xiii.430–8) who appears before his hut at the beginning of Book xiv, rescuing him from his dogs (xiv.29–36), bringing him in, seating him as comfortably as he can and preparing him a meal (xiv.45–51, 72–81, 112–3), and carefully waiting until he has eaten to ask after his name and origin (xiv.187–90; cf. xiv.45–7).[5] Throughout the Stranger's visit, in fact, Eumaios is the best of hosts, honoring him in every way possible (esp. xiv.437–8) and insisting he stay in the hut until Telemachos returns to the island (xv.335–9; cf. xvii.185–7). He does not do this because he recognizes the identity of his guest, as Roisman has argued, and Athena in fact turns Odysseus back into a beggar toward evening on the next day in order to keep precisely this from happening (xvi.454–9, esp. 457–8).[6] Nor should

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[4] As a herdsman, Eumaios naturally thinks of flocks when he imagines wealth (xiv.96–104). That he is so overawed by Odysseus' prosperity (esp. xiv.96–9) is a nice touch of characterization which underlines both his basic naiveté (n.b. iv.43–6, 71–81; vii.84–132) and the extent to which he has idealized his absent master.

[5] On Eumaios' hospitality, cf. Rose (1980) 286; Reece (1993) 147–55. Williams (1986) argues that this scene is to be understood as mock-heroic comedy, but the poet is simply adapting typical themes and formulae to an unusual situation; cf. Combellack (1959) 203–7.

[6] Roisman (1990), esp. 218–22, 224–32. In support of her thesis, Roisman 220, points out that at xiii.402–3 Athena does not include Eumaios in the catalogue of individuals to whom Odysseus is to appear 'unseemly,' but fails to note that five lines earlier the goddess says specifically 'I will make you unrecognizable to all mortals' (πάντεσσι βροτοῖσι xiii.397; cf. xiii.192). Nor does Roisman explain precisely how it is that the swineherd gets the idea that this ragged old beggar might be his master; *pace* Roisman 216, the fact that Odysseus is recognized by Eurykleia in Book xix does not mean his identity is more or less apparent to anyone who knows him, as Penelope's failure to guess who he is during their interview (xix.102–604) makes

the degree of specifically personal affection Eumaios feels for the Stranger be exaggerated. Although he is as gracious as he can be, after all, he makes it clear that his hospitality has an essentially provisional character. He is poor and only his master has the resources to support an unproductive man for any length of time and give him what he needs (esp. xiv.510–7; cf. xiv.58–9; xv.337–9), and as a result, when Telemachos arrives at the hut a few days later, Eumaios immediately and unceremoniously turns the Stranger over to him to care for (xvi.66–7); only after the boy says he would be willing to send extra supplies out to the country (xvi.82–4) does he suggest he would be happy to have him stay on there any longer (xvii.186–7) rather than accepting more or less immediate transport somewhere else (xiv.517; xv.339). So too in Book xvii, when the two men draw near the palace for the first time (xvii.260–1), the Stranger pauses to comment on the architecture and to speculate on what must be going on within (xvii.264–71). Eumaios is much less concerned with this than with which of them will enter the house first (xvii.273–9), however, for he is frightened of the Suitors' ways and of Antinoos in particular (cf. xiv.59–61; xv.327–9; xvii.388–9), and does not intend to be held responsible for introducing a ragged old kill-joy (cf. xvii.219–20) into their midst. Indeed, when Melanthios denounces him later for having done precisely this (xvii.370–2) and Antinoos adds his own rebuke (xvii.374–9), Eumaios denies outright having any connection to the beggar (esp. xvii.381–7). On the next morning, when no-one is about to cause him trouble, on the other hand, he is once again as gracious as can be (xx.166–7).

Although Eumaios is quite hospitable to the Stranger, therefore, this is a sign not of profound personal attachment (much less of recognition) but, as he says explicitly and repeatedly, a mark of his desire to do his duty before the gods (xiv.56–8, 388–9, 510–1) and preserve his good reputation among men (xiv.37–8, 402–5). Nor should the sacrifice at xiv.413–46 be taken to imply the contrary. When the Stranger first arrives at the hut, Eumaios somewhat apologetically (xiv.58–61) offers him a pair of roasted piglets (xiv.73–7), which he describes disparagingly as 'slaves' food' (xiv.80–1; cf. xiv.17–9). When evening comes, on the other hand, he orders the other herdsmen to

clear. Philoitios' remark that his vanished master is probably in the same ragged condition as the Stranger (xx.204–7), of course, is simple irony, and the cowherd has not the slightest suspicion who is standing before him until a full Book later (xxi.205–24).

bring in the best of the boars for supper (xiv.414–5; cf. xiv.419) and honors his guest with a choice cut off the back (xiv.437–8; cf. xiv.414–5, 441).[7] Roisman argues this is further proof the swineherd is aware of the true identity of his visitor, since otherwise his behavior would represent a "wanton felony" as he appropriates meat for himself and his guest which does not belong to him.[8] Rose, on the other hand, sees the sacrifice as evidence of Eumaios' increased respect for the Stranger as well as of his more and more urgent conviction that Odysseus really is returning to Ithaca.[9] Both approaches mistake the swineherd's actual situation and concerns and thus the meaning of his gesture.

Eumaios' farm is organized in a very systematic and precise fashion. At night, the sows are penned up in groups of fifty within the courtyard walls (xiv.13–6) along with their piglets (cf. xiv.73), while the boars sleep outside in no apparent order (xiv.16, 532–3);[10] during the day, the adult pigs of both sexes are driven out to forage for acorns (xiii.407–10; cf. xv.396–7; xvi.3) and the piglets left behind in the pens (xiv.73).[11] As a result, there is a tremendous uproar in the evening when the full-grown animals are driven home and mothers reunited with their babies (xiv.410–2; cf. x.411–4).[12] The piglets Eumaios offers his guest for his first meal in the hut are thus the best he can do at the time, since all the other animals are out in the fields. When the herds return later in the day, on the other hand, he

[7] On the peculiar nature of this sacrifice, see Kadletz (1984), with the response of Petropoulou (1987).

[8] Roisman (1990) 229.

[9] Rose (1980) 291.

[10] This is also Polyphemos' procedure with his flocks (ix.237–9; cf. ix.337–9). Sexual segregation makes good practical sense in the case of pigs, since boars are known to eat their offspring. That the system is extended to sheep and goats as well, however, suggests we are simultaneously dealing here with questions of general sexual ideology: females sleep 'safe inside' with their children, while males are allowed (or rather expected and compelled) to sleep 'where they will' outside, although they are given considerable breeding rights with the women within. It is also normally only males who are subject to the violence and depradations of (other) men (esp. xiv.17–8; cf. xiv.531–3).

[11] The imperfects at xiv.15–6 (ἐρχατόωντο, ἴαυον) must therefore refer to customary rather than ongoing action: the pigs are normally shut up and sleep in these places, although none are there now. When Eumaios refers to σῦς τάσδε at xiv.107, of course, he is not pointing to any particular pigs, but differentiating between the herds kept on Ithaca (xiv.103–8) and those on the mainland (xiv.100–2). Note also how there are only lambs and kids in Polyphemos' cave when Odysseus and his men arrive there at midday (ix.219–22; cf. ix.226–7).

[12] For the same sort of action in a human context, see xvii.36–44.

has the option of providing more substantial entertainment, should he wish to do so. His decision to sacrifice a boar in honor of the Stranger thus reflects in the first instance the realities of day-to-day life on the farm and cannot be taken as straightforward evidence of his increasing respect for the old man; at every point, Eumaios simply does the best he can for him.[13] Nor does the choice of victim represent a quiet act of rebellion against Odysseus or, alternatively, a veiled signal that the hero's identity has been discovered, for by his own testimony Eumaios has always had the right to share in the good things his labor produces and to use those goods to honor those who deserve it (esp. xv.371–3).[14] As it is, however, the fatted pigs and all they represent have come to be reserved for the Suitors (xiv.41–2, 81, 108; cf. i.250–1; ii.55–8), who have no legitimate claim on them but are nonetheless consuming them at an extraordinary rate (xiv.16–20). Eumaios himself, meanwhile, is reduced to eating whatever the young men will not have (xiv.80–95), and puts up with the situation only out of fear of those he characterizes at least half seriously as his 'new masters' (xiv.59–61; cf. xvii.388–9). The swineherd thus does nothing here which is not entirely within his traditional rights. To kill and eat the best of the pigs is nonetheless an act of defiance, not against Odysseus, however, but against the Suitors, as his specific words make clear: let those who work to raise these animals finally get some pleasure from them, he says, rather than a gang of worthless freeloaders (xiv.415–7). In its essence, therefore, the sacrifice of the boar is a sign of Eumaios' continued loyalty to Odysseus, in that it marks a limited attempt to restore the situation which existed before the hero disappeared. Ironically and totally unbeknownst to him, Eumaios manages in this way to give his master the welcome home he deserves. As far as he can tell, however, he is merely showing this latest visitor his customary hospitality (esp. xiv.437–8), treating him well just as he has treated others who preceded him (xiv.379–81). As regards the larger situation on Ithaca, his gesture is a small and relatively insignificant one, and there is little more he can do to correct the troubles which surround him. Indeed, it quickly emerges that he has simply abandoned the

[13] *Pace* Rose (1980) 289–92, who attempts to trace what he argues is Eumaios' gradually increasing respect and affection for his guest.

[14] Cf. Donlan (1982) 155, 157–8, 168–71, and note how at xx.191–2 Philoitios, speaking to Eumaios, calls the palace 'our house' (ἡμέτερον δῶμα).

city and thus the palace to the Suitors (xiv.372–4; xv.374–6; cf. xvi.27–9). In order to see some larger change, he needs Odysseus and, like Telemachos before him, he is trapped in uncertainty and increasing despair about the hero's fate. On the one hand, he asserts several times, graphically and apparently with full conviction, that he has perished (xiv.68, 133–8; cf. i.161–2, 166–8); on the other hand, he acknowledges he may still be alive somewhere (xiv.42–4; cf. ii.131–2) and remains capable not only of wishing he would return (xiv.171–3, 423–4; xvii.240–3), but of visualizing the event (xvii.244–5; cf. i.115–7).[15] All that really matters, however, is that his master has vanished (xiv.365–71; cf. i.234–43) and that in his absence the situation on his island and in his house has deteriorated drastically (e.g. xiv.81–108).

Odysseus has been disguised by Athena so as to be unrecognizable to family and friends (xiii.190–3, 397) and warned against giving anyone reason to suspect his identity (xiii.308–9), but has also been told to talk at length to his servant and ask him 'everything' (xiii.411). Indeed, Eumaios is characterized almost from the very first as extraordinarily loquacious, so that scarcely has the Stranger brushed off the dust from his encounter with the dogs than his host is describing the troubles in the house, speaking at first in general terms (xiv.40–4) but moving rapidly on to fill in all the details (esp. xiv.99–104).[16] When he knows he must, the swineherd can sometimes be quite discreet, as he proves in Book xvi by carefully reporting Telemachos' message to Penelope alone and then hastening back to the farm (esp. xvi.338–41), just as he has been ordered (xvi.132–4, 150–1). Nor is he likely to let any important information slip deliberately to the Suitors, for whom he feels nothing but loathing and contempt (e.g. xiv.81–95). All the same, his obvious love of talk and gossip poses a potential danger should he learn more than he ought, and Athena accordingly turns Odysseus back into an old man near the end of Book xvi specifically out of fear that were Eumaios to recognize him, he would run off to town immediately and announce the news to his mistress rather than 'shutting it up in his mind' (xvi.454–9).

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[15] Note how at xiv.89–90 Eumaios uses his favorite foil, the Suitors, to draw an implicit contrast between their apparent certainty about his master's death and his own ignorance.

[16] Cf. Philoitios' speech in xx.204–25, which also includes a great deal of unsolicited information about his master and his business.

Eumaios is thus both a blessing and a problem for Odysseus, who needs the temporary shelter he can offer and can only profit from keeping the thought of his vanished master alive in his servant's heart, but cannot afford to let him guess what is really going on until this is absolutely necessary. The swineherd himself, meanwhile, has his own problems and agenda. As Alkinoos says in a similar connection in the middle of Book xi, there are many impostors roaming the earth, 'putting together lies from sources no-one could fathom' (xi.363–6), and Eumaios has in fact been taken in quite recently by an Aitolian who claimed to have seen Odysseus repairing his ships in Crete and ready to return home at any moment (xiv.378–85). He accordingly knows from bitter experience that desperate men will tell any sort of story if they believe they will profit by it and, even worse, is aware his beloved Penelope routinely listens to such tales and breaks her heart over them (xiv.124–32; cf. xvii.508–11). Although he is eager to swap personal stories with his old guest (esp. xiv.45–7), therefore, he is simultaneously concerned to save himself and his mistress from further exploitation (esp. xiv.129–30), and he accordingly tells the Stranger outright several times not to offer lies about his master, since they will not be believed (xiv.363–5, 387–9; cf. xiv.131–2). In fact, Eumaios is considerably more credulous than he pretends to be here, as his eagerness to repeat the substance of the Stranger's report of Odysseus to Penelope a few Books later makes quite clear (xvii.525–7). What he is doing, however, is attempting to reduce his visitor's incentive to try to take him in, and he in fact takes measures against this from the very first. When the Stranger asks for the name of Eumaios' absent master and suggests he may have news of him (xiv.115–20), as often happens in this world (e.g. i.405–8, 414; ii.30; xiv.373–4), the swineherd initially refuses to accommodate him, speaking only of 'him' (κεῖνος xiv.70, 90, 122; τοῦ xiv.133; τόν and αὐτοῦ xiv.135; ὁ μέν xiv.137) and of his ἄναξ (xiv.40, 67; cf. xiv.63, 138–9). If this old wanderer lacks a name to which to attach his tales, after all, he will be that much less able to deceive those he speaks with on Ithaca than previous visitors were.[17] As he becomes caught up in his sad reminiscences and grief (esp. xiv.137–43), however, Eumaios momentarily drops his guard and lets his master's name slip (xiv.144).

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[17] On personal strategies of this sort, see Olson (1992), responding to Austin (1972). On the power of names in the *Odyssey*, see also Brown (1966); Fenik (1974) 5–60; Peradotto (1990), esp. 94–170.

He obviously realizes immediately that he has done something dreadfully wrong, for he hastens to add that αἰδώς normally restrains him from speaking in this way (xiv.145–7).[18] All the same, the damage has been done, and the Stranger picks up the fateful name at once and uses it repeatedly in the speech which follows (xiv.152, 159, 161; cf. xiv.321, 323, 470, 484, 486), claiming now to know exactly when the vanished hero is coming home (esp. xiv.161–3).[19] That Eumaios refuses to believe a word of this (xiv.166–9) is tremendously ironic, given that Odysseus has returned and is actually sitting there before him, but his reaction is entirely appropriate, for the old man is behaving in precisely the manner which has just been characterized as typical of vagrant beggars (xiv.124–5).[20] Indeed, the Stranger now goes on to ask specifically for a gift of clothing should the missing king return, just as his host predicted that he would (xiv.152–4; cf. xiv.131–2).[21] So too a little later on, when he offers another, even more elaborate story, claiming now to have news of Odysseus' imminent return which both explains his temporary delay in appearing (xiv.327–30) and includes a list of all the good things he will bring with him (xiv.323–6), Eumaios treats this as another typical and thus unbelievable story (xiv.382–5; compare 383 to 327–30, 384 to 161–3, 385 to 323–6) and rejects it out of hand (xiv.386–7). The irony is again intense, for his master has indeed come back with an immense store of treasure (esp. xiii.135–8) and the swineherd will eventually realize the significance of what he is being told here (xxi.205–24). For the moment, however, the more the Stranger insists Odysseus is coming home and the greater the wealth of details and oaths he adds to support his assertions (xiv.321–33, 393–400),

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[18] Exactly what Eumaios means by this remark has been a matter of considerable dispute; see Austin (1972) 11–2; Fenik (1974) 28–30; Mühlestein (1984) 146–8.

[19] Once his master's name has escaped, Eumaios uses it freely (xiv.364, 515; xv.337; xvii.240, 314). He also quickly names Penelope and Telemachos (xiv.172–3), whom he has likewise kept anonymous up to this point (xiv.123, 127–8; cf. xiv.137), as well as Laertes (xiv.173), but not his beloved Antikleia (κουριδίης τ' ἀλόχοιο δαίφρονος xv.356; ἡ δ' xv.358; κείνη xv.361; αὐτή xv.363; ἐκείνη xv.368).

[20] All the same, the Stranger's insistence that he would never try to take advantage of Penelope and Telemachos as others have before (xiv.156–7; cf. xiv.122–30) is reflected in the fact that the Odysseus he imagines punishes precisely those who fail to show respect to his wife and child (xiv.163–4).

[21] On the significance of the Stranger's request in the larger context of the poem, see Block (1985). That he asks for his reward only if the hero returns is no proof of his veracity, but simply the best he can do, given what Eumaios has just said about his likely strategy.

the less credence Eumaios puts in him (esp. xiv.363–5, 387). Part of Odysseus' purpose here may be to keep a bit of hope alive in the heart of his at least superficially cynical and despairing (esp. xiv.133–7) servant. The more substantial effect of his words, however, is to disguise him as effectively as possible from this man who has just proven he cannot be relied upon to keep even the simplest secret. To all appearances, Odysseus is simply another calculating old liar, who has taken advantage of a momentary slip of the tongue on his host's part to fabricate a fortunately all-too-transparent story. Indeed, all that obviously distinguishes him from the Aitolian who preceded him (cf. xiv.379–85) is that he can be seen through much more easily. At the same time, the extended, allegedly autobiographical story the Stranger offers at xiv.199–359 serves to ensure him as much sympathy as possible by appealing to Eumaios' clear delight in tales of bitter grief and woe (xiv.45–7, 185; cf. xv.398–401; xvii.515–21), while simultaneously assimilating himself to his host and his vanished master.[22]

The Stranger begins what he claims is his life-story by describing himself as the bastard child of a wealthy man, who was treated well at first but given very little when the legitimate sons divided up the property after their father died (xiv.199–210).[23] His own ἀρετή eventually won him a wealthy wife (xiv.211–3), but all of that is gone now and replaced by grief (xiv.213–5). The first part of this story thus presents the Stranger as a man in many ways like Eumaios. As we eventually find out and Odysseus already knows, the swineherd too was nobly born (xv.413–4; cf. xiv.205–6), but was raised in Laertes' palace as a slave (xv.363–5; cf. xiv.202–3) and later banished twice thence, first when he reached the age for marriage (xv.366–70; cf. xiv.211) and then a second time when overbearing young men took over the house after his master's disappearance (xiv.372–4;

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[22] Virtually everyone in the *Odyssey* loves sad stories (e.g. i.325–7; viii.81–2, 90–1, 577–86; xi.367–9), provided they do not hit too close to home (i.340–4; viii. 83–6, 92, 521–31; cf. iv.219–43); cf. Nagy (1979) 97–102. Eumaios thus differs from Homer's other characters only in being slightly more straightforward in expressing his tastes.

[23] There are other versions of this lie at xiii.256–86; xvii.419–44; xviii.138–40; xix.75–80, 172–202; cf. Trahman (1952); Walcot (1977); Emlyn-Jones (1986); Reece (1994). Trahman 38, and Walcot 14–5, both note the stress the Stranger lays on the institution of hospitality. Walcot 13–5, argues that the lies seem to draw on Odysseus' real experiences abroad, but as the details to which he points are all probably standard storytelling motifs, there is no need to make too much of the connections; compare Emlyn-Jones 4–7.

xv.374–6; cf. xiv.209–10). He too has managed to support himself by means of his own hard work and virtue (xv.371–3; cf. xiv.212) and ought to have earned a wife for all his trouble (xiv.62–4; cf. xiv.211), but his affairs are now increasingly in ruins (e.g. xiv.16–9; cf. xiv.213). All the same, the Stranger quickly comes to resemble Odysseus as well. He was once a warrior *par excellence*, he insists, distinguished for his courage, his ability to break the enemy's line and his speed of foot (xiv.212–3, 216–21), and fought for ten full years at Troy (xiv.235–42).[24] After the city was sacked, he made his way home, but Zeus immediately roused him up to go out raiding again (xiv.243–7), and since then his life has been nothing but trouble and wandering (xiv.257–359).[25] Although he returned very briefly to his family, therefore, he remains much like Odysseus as Eumaios imagines him (esp. xiv.42–3), roaming the world, begging for his bread and unable to find his way to where he would like to go (xiv.334–59).[26] Virtually the only positive characters in his story, moreover, are his dead father (xiv.203–4) and two benevolent kings who protected and aided him to the extent they could (xiv.278–86, 316–20, 334–7) but were unable to ensure his ultimate success and safety, and all these figures together recall what his vanished master meant and means to Eumaios (esp. xiv.138–47; cf. xxi.215–6). The villains of the piece, on the other hand, are first a treacherous Phoenician (xiv.288–98) and a group of slave-trading sailors (xiv.334–43), and then a crowd of hybristic fools who outrage the property and families of others but pay a deadly price for their misbehavior (xiv.262–72). The first group finds an obvious equivalent in the Phoenician merchants who stole the young Eumaios and sold him into slavery (xv.415–84); the second group is very much like the Suitors,

[24] For Odysseus' speed, cf. XXIII.740–79 and the rueful comments at viii.230–3.

[25] Note also the Stranger's emphasis on his constitutional inability to settle down to work or any other sedentary form of existence (esp. xiv.222–3) or to endure a peaceful life for any period of time (esp. xiv.244–7). Instead, he says, he is drawn to conflict and war (esp. xiv.224–6), and while that may seem odd to some, that is the way Zeus made him (xiv.227–8). Although the palace has become a rough and violent place (e.g. xiv.59–61, 81–92), therefore, that is not the sort of thing to put him off (cf. xv.313–24), and one final goal of Odysseus' forged autobiography is accordingly to impress upon his host that he may well go off to the palace in the end, despite the warnings he is given.

[26] In fact, the way in which the Stranger comes home from Troy only to leave again for further wanderings is a good description of what the real Odysseus will eventually be forced to do (xi.119–34; cf. xxiii.267–81).

whose more than piratical outrages Eumaios loathes and resents (xiv.81–95), although vengeance on them has yet to be taken. Precisely as intended, this tale of woe appeals profoundly to the swineherd (xiv.361–2), who nonetheless refuses to put any open credence in the accompanying report of his master's allegedly impending return (esp. xiv.363–5). As far as he can tell, his guest is simply another typical wanderer, clumsy enough in the lies he tells, however, that one need not be taken in by them. He still deserves protection as a guest and suppliant (esp. xiv.386–9; cf. xiv.56–8), and while some of what he has to say is apparently complete fabrication, that is not obviously the case with all of it (esp. xiv.361–5) and there is still a remarkable pleasure in the listening (esp. xvii.513–21).[27] When dinner is over, the dishes have been cleared and everyone has begun to think of bed (xiv.454–6), Odysseus tells his third and final story, designed specifically, Homer says, to test whether Eumaios is sufficiently concerned for him to find him a robe in which to sleep (xiv.459–61).[28] Once again, the narrative turns on the image of Odysseus.

Long ago when he was young, the Stranger says, he, Menelaos and Eumaios' vanished master set an ambush outside Troy and spent the night with their men in the marsh and reeds about the city (xiv.469–75). It was bitterly cold (xiv.475–7), but he had nothing in which to sleep (xiv.480–2) and would therefore have frozen to death (xiv.487–8), had he not finally described his dilemma to Odysseus, who quickly hit upon a plan to get him a blanket by convincing Thoas to run off to the main camp, leaving his robe behind (xiv.492–502).[29] The Stranger presents this as a thoughtless, silly boast (xiv.463–6), but its basic, surface point is clear: he wants something for his

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[27] Note also how Eumaios still expresses no doubts about most of the basic details of the Aitolian's story (i.e. that he had killed a man and been driven into exile as a result), although he recognizes that he lied about Odysseus (xiv.379–85). With the Stranger, the basic irony is that the swineherd disbelieves precisely the wrong part of the tale he is told.

[28] On this scene, see also Murnaghan (1987) 108–10.

[29] Brennan (1987) makes the intriguing suggestion that the Stranger intends this reference to Thoas son of Andraimon, identified in the *Iliad* as a leader of the Aitolians (II.638–44; IV.527; XIII.216–8; XV.281–2), as a response to Eumaios' complaint about being deceived by the anonymous Aitolian wanderer (xiv.379–85). Thoas is thus paid back for his countryman's treachery, and the swineherd accordingly applauds the tale even more warmly than might otherwise have been the case (xiv.508–9).

bed on this long, wet winter's night (xiv.457–61; cf. xv.392).[30] The way in which he gets his message across and works upon his auditors is nonetheless quite clever. His situation on that night long ago at Troy was a bit embarassing (cf. xiv.492–3), he suggests, but far less so than now, for then he had a robe but had left it behind in an act of foolishness (xiv.480–2), whereas at the moment he is merely utterly impoverished. He had also been asked to come along on this expedition by Odysseus and Menelaos (xiv.470–1) and was thus not an uninvited guest there, as he is in Eumaios' hut. Nor was the weather then merely gusting rain driven by a west-wind (xiv.457–8), but snow and frost coming down from the north (xiv.475–7), which actually threatened his life (xiv.487–8). In his story, finally, no-one was forced to give up his bed for the entire night, for he made his request not at the beginning of the evening but only in the third watch (xiv.483), when his companions had all slept comfortably for a long time (xiv.478–9) and his own situation had grown desperate (xiv.487–9). By telling his story in this way, therefore, the Stranger transforms his veiled request for a χλαῖνα into something both much more pressing and much less unreasonable than it really is (cf. xiv.513–4). He is not going to freeze to death beside Eumaios' fire, heavy blanket or not, after all, but he manages to suggest he will. At the same time, he does not claim for himself the role of Odysseus. Instead, Odysseus is the man who solves his problem with what is presented as a brilliant stroke of intelligence (esp. xiv.490–1; n.b. xiv.486 πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ) which at the same time costs him nothing, since it is another man's robe in which the narrator ultimately sleeps (xiv.499–502). Someone else can also take the hero's part tonight, therefore, but since the other herdsmen are aware of the Stranger's dilemma (esp. xiv.462) as his comrades at Troy were not (esp. xiv.492–3), Eumaios cannot so painlessly discover a robe in which his guest can pass the night. Instead, he gives up his own bed (xiv.520–2) and sleeps outdoors in bitter winter weather, just outside the city where his enemies remain in power, precisely like Odysseus in the story to which he has just listened (xiv.524–33; cf. xiv.469–77). That the hero closes his tale in an apparently awkward fashion, spelling out what he wants as if afraid his listeners might otherwise mistake his meaning (xiv.504–6), of course, is of a piece with his

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[30] On the season of the year and its implications, see Austin (1975) 239–53, esp. 242–4.

behavior throughout the scene, for although Eumaios remarks dryly in response that this was a 'faultless' and effective fable (xiv.508–9), the real irony is once again that he is convinced he is seeing through his guest at the very moment he is being most decisively taken in (cf. xiv.363–5, 386–9).[31]

Homer leaves Eumaios and Odysseus at this point and only returns to them some three hundred lines later, on the evening of the next day of their story (xv.301–2). After dinner is over, the hero tests his host once more (cf. xiv.459–61), this time to see whether he will still want him to stay on in the country or will send him off to town the moment he expresses an interest in leaving (xv.303–24). If Eumaios' hospitality falters, Odysseus is presumably prepared to leave the hut and look for an excuse to hang about the palace by splitting wood, serving food and pouring wine for the young men there, just as he proposes now (xv.313–24). Indeed, he ultimately justifies his presence in the μέγαρον two nights later by making a great and almost comic show of tending the fire in the braziers, insisting on his ability to do so until dawn if necessary (xviii.317–9, 343–4). In that case, he must use his final night in the hut to ask his host 'everything,' just as Athena commanded (xiii.411), and thus prepare himself for his return to the palace. When Eumaios encourages him to stay on in the country until Telemachos comes back (xv.335–9), however, the pressure to gather immediately useful information evaporates and Odysseus asks instead about his own father and mother (xv.346–50). Even after Eumaios closes his response with an allusion to the disorder prevailing in the palace (xv.374–9), in fact, the hero does not follow up this remark with a request for more details about the situation there, but returns instead to the swineherd's account of his relationship with Antikleia and the grief he felt upon her death (xv.358–70), and asks about his childhood and how he came to be enslaved (xv.381–8).[32]

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[31] On Eumaios' aesthetic appreciation of his old guest's tale, see Most (1989a) 131–3.

[32] That Odysseus is already anticipating extracting the information he needs from Telemachos is not an obvious conclusion from the text, for although Athena tells him at xiii.411–3 that he is to wait in Eumaios' hut while she goes off to Sparta to fetch back the boy, she does not say where the two of them will meet up. While Eumaios twice refers to the return of his young master to Ithaca (xiv.515 = xv.337), moreover, he never says specifically that the Stranger will encounter him in the countryside. Indeed, he is clearly surprised when Telemachos appears on the farm, not only because he was worried about the ambush set by the Suitors (cf. xiv.174–84), but also because visits of this sort are no longer customary for him

Clearly he is once again playing the part of an idle wanderer and gossip, but as a result Eumaios' tale of his youth and how he came to Ithaca occupies virtually all the rest of the scene (xv.403–84). Homer uses these stories in part to lend the swineherd's character a bit more depth and interest in preparation for the important role he will play in the rest of the poem.[33] At the same time, they raise a series of interrelated issues having to do with servile loyalty and servile sexuality which shape the atmosphere in which Odysseus returns to his palace and stir up serious questions about whether such a homecoming is possible at all, thus throwing into quiet doubt some of the most basic presuppositions of the story of the *Odyssey*.

Eumaios' description of the wretched condition of Laertes (xv.353–7) leads him to think first of his old mistress Antikleia and his youth (xv.358–70) and then of the sad state of affairs in Odysseus' house, as a result of which he is no longer eager to visit there (xv.374–6; cf. xiv.372–4). Antikleia brought him up together with Ktimene, Odysseus' younger sister (xv.363–5), he recalls, but this brief sojourn in the master's house ended when the two of them reached ἥβην πολυήρατον: Ktimene went off to Same as a bride, while he was given a mantle, tunic and sandals and sent out to work on the estate (xv.366–70). Eumaios seems to have no doubt that Antikleia loved him from the heart (xv.365, 370) and never interprets the treatment he ultimately received from her as abuse or rejection.[34] All the same, he was put out of the house, and this brief initial version of his life-history can be read as a single cycle in what he defines a few lines later as a basic recurring pattern of servile existence: a short period of bliss and ease spent in the palace in the presence of a loving mistress, followed by a return to the countryside and work, bearing a gift of some sort as a token of her and her affection (compare xv.365–70 with xv.376–9). That Eumaios is no longer free to pass the time with his beloved almost-mother Antikleia (esp. xv.361–2) and that he does not visit his new δέσποινα Penelope (xv.374–5), that is to say, are functionally one and the same crisis: the ideal

(esp. xvi.27–9). Homer, on the other hand, has apparently been planning a reunion here all along; see Chapter 7.

[33] Cf. the elaborate introduction given Theoklymenos at xv.223–56, which seems designed to mark him out as a figure who will be of more than transient significance in the poem. For a different view of the effect of Eumaios' story on Homer's audience, see Minchin (1992).

[34] For virtual adoption by the mistress of an individual who remains a servant upon reaching maturity, compare Penelope's rearing of Melantho (xviii.322–3).

world of the past, which involves youth and physical and emotional closeness to the mistress or mother, on the one hand, and a temporary residence in the house, eating, drinking and talking in her presence, on the other, has been disrupted.[35] The causes of this disruption are physical maturation in the first story (xv.366–70) and the appearance of ἄνδρες ὑπερφίαλοι in the second (xv.375–6), but the result in each case is the same: a painful exile and stoic, enduring grief.

Eumaios takes up these same themes again when he offers a longer and more complex version of his story at xv.403–84. He begins by describing his native island and his youth there in what are obviously idealizing terms: there was no hunger, sickness or suffering on Syrie (xv.405–11), and his father was a king (xv.413–4).[36] Eumaios' tragedy is that he was snatched out of that apparently perfect world and sold into slavery on Ithaca, where he has been ever since and where he seems likely to remain (xv.482–4; cf. xiv.140–3). This is thus only a further and more nuanced variation on his already twice-repeated tale of 'exile from paradise,' 'exile from home' and 'exile from youth,' and the causes he identifies for his disaster tie all three versions tightly together. Trouble began for him, the swineherd reports, with the arrival on his island of Phoenician traders loaded down with goods (xv.415–6). There they came into contact with one of his father's slave-girls (esp. xv.417–9), who had herself been kidnapped from Sidon as she was returning from the fields (ἀγρόθεν) to her family's house one day and sold (xv.425–9). She remained eager to return home (xv.431–7) and therefore came to an agreement with the sailors that when they had finished selling their cargo and were prepared to leave, they would send her a message (xv.445–7). She would then flee to the ship, bringing with her whatever she could find of value, including the young Eumaios, who had been placed in her charge (xv.448–53). At the end of a year (xv.455), one of the Phoenicians arrived at the house with a necklace of gold and amber, which he offered for sale, and gave the woman her signal (xv.457–63). She then stole away at dusk to the harbor with three gold cups hidden in her dress and the little Eumaios in tow (xv.465–73). Divine vengeance upon her was swift: seven days later the gods struck

[35] Note the ambiguity which surrounds the identity of the δέσποινα in xv.374–9.
[36] For recent attempts to locate 'the real Syrie,' see Brown (1985); Hoekstra, in Heubeck and Hoekstra (1989) ad xv.403.

her dead and the sailors unceremoniously pitched her body overboard (xv.477–81). Eumaios, however, was left behind to be sold and exiled forever from his parents' home (xv.481–4).

On one level the Sidonian woman is easily assimilated to Antikleia, who also raised Eumaios as her own (xv.450; cf. xv.363) and then, after removing him from the house (xv.469–72; cf. xv.368–70), died and left him alone and a slave (xv.478–83; cf. xv.358–60). At the same time, her story is only another variant on the swineherd's multiple tale of the interrupted servile cycle of absence from and return to the house and all it represents. The Sidonian woman too was torn away from an ideal youth and her parents (esp. xv.426–8, 431–3) and converted into a servant, and she too dreamt of somehow recovering the past. Unlike Eumaios, who transferred his loyalties unambiguously to the master whom he now longs to see more than mother, father or native land (xiv.138–44), however, she actively rejected her status as slave and exile and attempted to escape it. Whereas Eumaios hates and loathes the invading Suitors (e.g. xiv.81–2, 95; xv.375–6), moreover, she joined forces with the Phoenicians and ultimately paid for her decision with her life.[37] In addition, her infidelity began only when she secretly shared 'a bed and love-making, things which charm the minds of female women, even if one is a good worker,' with one of the Phoenicians (xv.419–22).[38] Once again, therefore, an awakening of feminine sexuality somehow leads more or less directly to Eumaios' exile from the house he loves (cf. xv.366–70).

Eumaios' stories thus raise a series of complex and apparently interconnected issues and concerns, including abandonment or rejection by the mistress/mother, the problem of servile loyalty (or disloyalty) and its consequences for a house, the emergence and control of sexuality and particularly female sexuality, and the lure and treachery of the past. All these questions are explicitly set in an atmosphere of idealizing storytelling and all become important in the final third of the *Odyssey*, as the king and father at last reenters the

[37] Note also that whereas his own nurse sold him into slavery, Eumaios loves and guards Telemachos, whom he treats almost as his own child (esp. xvi.17–21) and whose brother Odysseus ultimately promises to make him (xxi.215–6). On the latter point, cf. Rose (1980) 294–7; Murnaghan (1987) 41–2.

[38] The strain this doubled story exerts on the narrative structure of the poem can be seen in the odd shift of scene and addressees from xv.420–33 (obviously a very private encounter and discussion) to xv.434–53 (apparently a conversation with a whole group of men).

house he left so long ago. Many of his servants are not as pure and loyal as his swineherd, for Melantho in particular sleeps with Eurymachos (xviii.325) and a whole crowd of women leave the house for the beds of other men on the night before the contest of the bow (xx.6–7). As Eumaios' story has made clear, serving-women who are illegitimately sexually active and at the same time eager to leave the palace for the company of other men put the entire house and the master's goods and son in particular at risk, and Odysseus accordingly tosses and turns as he watches his maidservants go out (xx.9–30) and slips into profound doubt about his ability to take revenge upon the Suitors (xx.38–40). When he finally regains power in Book xxii, on the other hand, he fulfils the domestic pattern left incomplete on Syrie earlier. After the Sidonian woman slept with one of the Phoenicians and arranged her escape with the crew as a whole, she urged them to keep her secret from her master, warning that otherwise the consequences would be terrible for all of them (xv.440–4). In the end, it was she alone who paid with her life for her misbehavior (xv.478–81), while the Phoenicians simply sailed away. On Ithaca, however, not only are the sexually compromised maidservants put to death (xxii.458–73), but the Suitors too are butchered in the halls and accused at the crucial moment not just of courting Penelope but of sleeping with the household's other women as well (xxii.37–8).[39]

Eumaios' stories thus serve in the first instance to raise a series of highly charged issues having to do with servants and their role in a house and thus, like the tales of Agamemnon and the Wanderings earlier, stir up an awareness that there are many disturbing possibilities here; the homecoming of Odysseus will not necessarily be a simple or straightforward affair (cf. i.18–9). At the same time, Eumaios can be seen as his master's servile double: raised in the house as Antikleia's child, he was expelled from there at about the time the hero went

[39] Cf. xvi.108–9, where the Stranger lists among the Suitors' outrages the 'dragging about' of servant-women. The contrast between sexual activity and the lack of it among Odysseus' servants is underlined by the fact that Eumaios routinely spends the night sleeping with his pigs rather than with a woman (esp. xv.556–7). Only Odysseus can give him a wife, he knows, and the general tragedy of the hero's disappearance is thus compounded for him by the frustration of his enforced and apparently interminable celibacy (xiv.61–71). It can accordingly be no accident that the first thing the hero offers his two herdsmen in his effort to convince them to join his attack on the Suitors is a wife (xxi.213–4). Odysseus' other servile ally, Eurykleia, is likewise a virgin (i.430–3).

off (in a considerably more spectacular fashion) to Troy. He too loved and longs for Odysseus' mother (xv.358–71; cf. esp. xi.204–22) and is simultaneously prevented from sitting and talking with Penelope by the outrageous behavior of the Suitors (xv.374–6; cf. xvii.561–88). That master and man return to the palace together in Book xvii is thus only appropriate, and the success or failure of the one is patently bound up with that of the other.[40] The odd combination of causes which Eumaios identifies as responsible for his own various exiles from home—the dangerous power of awakening female sexuality, the lure of the natal house and a desire to flee to it, the interference of a mob of male intruders somehow confounded with a single anonymous seducer, the beloved but rejecting mother—, moreover, are all united on Ithaca in the persons of Penelope and the Suitors. For Odysseus' wife to give in to the Suitors generally, after all, would mean both to leave his house to go back to her father's (e.g. ii.195–7; cf. xv.431–7) and to surrender herself physically to one man in particular (e.g. xviii.212–3; cf. xv.420–2), thus giving expression to her long-repressed sexuality (xviii.190–6; cf. xv.366–7), while at the same time abandoning the child she claims to love so much (e.g. xix.525–9; cf. xv.368–70, 450–3, 469–84). When read together, therefore, Eumaios' stories point both to a concern about a woman's residual loyalty to her birth-family and the tension this may introduce into the household where she is perhaps only temporarily residing (xv.431–7), and to an awareness (or anxiety) that a man can inevitably expect to be betrayed or banished by the women whom he loves.[41] Nor is this the end of the matter. In fact, the actual reason Eumaios cannot return to an idyllic life on Syrie or to his happy days with Antikleia is not the misbehavior of a servant-woman and thus sex and the power it allegedly exercises over the female mind (xv.420–2; cf. xv.366–70), but the simple fact that time has passed and that an ideal world has never really existed. He is no longer a boy, death is one of the basic rules which govern the world, and the ideal life is always and eternally lost almost by definition, precisely like a perfect, happy future. Indeed, despite the swineherd's bitter words about Helen, whom he clearly holds in the last analysis

[40] Note esp. xxi.359–67, where Eumaios' failure of nerve when the Suitors begin to shout at him almost costs Odysseus his chance at the bow.

[41] On this issue, although without specific reference to Eumaios' story, cf. Murnaghan (1987) 118–47.

responsible for all his troubles (xiv.68–71), as well as the *Odyssey*'s general tendency to treat female sexuality as a threat which men must confront and control or be destroyed,[42] the most basic threat to Odysseus' return and all it might mean is of a very different nature. The fact of the matter is that no real man could come back and oust so many suitors from his house (ii.246–51; xvi.254–7), while the beggar's disguise the hero dons temporarily is what he would inevitably really have looked like after twenty years of war and wandering (cf. xix.358–60; xx.204–6).[43] One function of Eumaios' stories is thus to point to the ultimate unreality of Homer's larger tale and to hint at a provisional solution to the dilemma it poses in the swineherd's own apparent acceptance of exile and grief (esp. xiv.443–5) and his quiet persistence in doing right and resisting wrong. Eumaios himself has no such intentions with his stories, of course, but is simply passing another long midwinter's night as best he can (xv.392–4), taking an odd kind of pleasure in recalling the griefs of the past for a man who seems likely to appreciate them (xv.398–401). He is precisely who he has always been, poor but willing to do his duty to the gods and his guest and thus protect his own reputation among men, utterly loyal to his master and his family, and completely and ironically unaware of the real identity of the Stranger. Like Telemachos before him, he is trapped between the past and the future, with no apparent hope of righting the world on his own, which is to say without the intervention of the gods or some other miracle. What he has no way of knowing and clearly cannot even imagine is that his master is back on his native island and that his own story is about to head off in an extraordinary if not altogether unhoped-for direction.

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[42] Cf. Foley (1978) 7–26.
[43] Cf. Murnaghan (1987) 14–6.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE STORY OF THE RETURN

As I have argued in detail in the preceding chapters, up through the end of Book xv or so the *Odyssey* consists largely of stories, which work together to prepare Homer's characters and (much more to the point) his audience for the eventual return of the king to Ithaca. Inset tales continue to appear in the final third of the poem (e.g. xviii.138–40; xix.393–466, 518–23; xxi.295–304). All the same, the focus there is much more on the narrative present than the past, and thus on precisely how Odysseus will take what is, from at least v.23–4 on, his inevitable revenge upon the Suitors. The last three chapters of this book are devoted to the question of precisely what the hero's triumph might mean. Before turning to larger interpretative issues of that sort, however, I want to ask again after the basic mechanics of Homer's tale and in particular how he maintains tension and thus interest in a story whose outcome has been known in general terms for thousands of lines and many hours of performance-time.[1] As I hope to show, the answer to that question helps resolve several traditional problems in the text.

Precisely how fixed Odysseus' story was by the time the *Odyssey* we have was sung and written down cannot be known with any certainty, although its details can scarcely have been any more firmly set than those of Agamemnon's murder apparently were in the same period.[2] Homer (or his Muse) says outright in the poem's opening lines that the hero's return to Ithaca will be turbulent (i.18–9), but adds no further details and goes on to play throughout the Telemacheia with the idea that Odysseus might be murdered upon his homecoming. So too, although many of the characters in Books i–iv imagine and describe the moment at which Odysseus will appear in his halls and confront his enemies (i.115–6, 163–5, 255–6; ii.246–8;

[1] On narrative technique in Homer, see most recently de Jong (1989); Richardson (1990).

[2] See Chapter 3. The fact that no trace of any variant *Odyssey* survives proves nothing about the period before the version preserved for us became a fixed and thus authoritative text; cf. Lord (1968) 2–5, and the highly speculative discussion of Reece (1994).

iii.216–7; iv.335–46; cf. i.268–9; ii.59, 163–7, 237–8), beyond Halitherses' vague insistence that he will come 'unknown to all' (ii.174–6), no-one ever speculates as to what his precise strategy for defeating them will be. At the beginning of Book v, Zeus finally offers an unambiguous assertion that Athena intends her favorite to take revenge upon the Suitors (v.23–4) and describes in detail his journey to Scheria and his eventual departure from there (v.30–40). All the same, Zeus also breaks off at that point and says nothing more about what will happen on Ithaca (v.41–2). Nor do Hermes and Kalypso add anything of substance to the question (e.g. v.113–5), although she does insist vaguely that further troubles are certainly awaiting Odysseus at home (v.206–10), just as Alkinoos merely observes that his guest will suffer whatever is fated for him (vii.196–8). Even Tiresias' otherwise quite circumstantial prophecy about the hero's future offers nothing more about events on Ithaca than that he will kill his enemies 'either by treachery or openly' (xi.118–20).[3] Throughout the first half of his poem, therefore, Homer raises the question of how Odysseus will take his revenge often enough to excite his audience's interest in it, but refuses to offer them a definitive answer. Once the king is back on Ithaca, this narrative strategy becomes even more important and apparent.

When Athena reveals her identity to Odysseus on the beach toward the end of Book xiii, she says she has come to 'weave him a plan' (xiii.303), which is to say to determine precisely how he will proceed. She thus presents herself as a sort of surrogate narrator, but this is only to make explicit something hinted at repeatedly elsewhere in the poem. It is Athena who focusses Zeus' attention on the problem of Odysseus in the first place (i.48–62), after all, just as a few Books later she intervenes to turn the story away from Telemachos and toward his father's homecoming (v.5–20). She is also responsible for bringing the narrative to its end (xxiv.528–48) and initiates or inspires most of the vital actions and decisions within it (e.g. i.88–95, 272–86; vi.2–3, 13–40; xviii.158–62; xxi.1–4; xxiv.516–24). Indeed, Zeus says several times that everything which happens here is only a

[3] That Homer's mortal characters do not know or discuss exactly how Odysseus will take his revenge is understandable, but the equally pronounced reticence on the part of the poet's prophets and gods suggests he is pursuing some particular agenda in this matter. Athena's otherwise crisp and circumstantial advice to Telemachos lapses off into obscurity at a similar point (i.294–6).

reflection of his daughter's desires (v.23–4 = xxiv.479–80).[4] Athena does not have complete authorial power, for it is her father who ratifies and fleshes out her wishes and decrees in advance how things will be (v.25–42; xxiv.481–6).[5] All the same, she does serve to a considerable extent as the poet's alter-ego within the tale and is the tool he uses to impose his will upon the action at awkward moments (xix.476–9), to turn it in unexpected or otherwise impossible new directions (e.g. i.320–2; ii.382–406; xvi.297–8; xviii.158–62), and to avoid unnecessary questions and complications (e.g. ii.395–8; vii.14–7; xiii.189–93, 397–403; xx.33–4; xxiii.371–2).[6] It is thus a matter of more than passing interest that she is the cleverest and most cunning of the gods (xiii.298–9), capable of lying convincingly when it suits her purposes (esp. vi.20–33; xv.14–23; cf. Hes. *Th.* 27–8) and a bit of a mocker (esp. xiii.237–49; xx.33–5), for in the second half of his story Homer as well practices deception and fraud on a routine basis and repeatedly withholds crucial information from his audience. This process begins quite emphatically here in Book xiii, where he insists that Athena and Odysseus sit down together to devise death for the Suitors (xiii.372–3), but she offers her favorite (and the poet's audience) very little specific information about what is to come and most of what she does say turns out to be misleading.[7]

Athena's orders to Odysseus in this scene are relatively clear and to the point. Above all else, he is to keep his identity secret from everyone (xiii.308–9; cf. xiii.192–3), and she disguises him as a broken-down old beggar precisely in order to make this possible (xiii.397–403). She also tells him he will suffer many griefs at the hands of men (xiii.309–10) and implies he will encounter and somehow test Penelope before taking his revenge (xiii.335–6; cf. xiii.192, 402–3). Although she says she will stand by him when the crucial

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[4] On Athena and her νόος as central agents in the *Odyssey*, see Müller (1966). On the connections between the gods and the narrator, cf. Richardson (1990) 192–4.

[5] Note esp. xxiv.481 ('Act as you wish, but I will tell you how it is appropriate'), and compare Zeus' role as sender of confirmatory omens (e.g. ii.141–76; xx.97–104; xxiv.537–45).

[6] As narrator, she can also move effortlessly from one place to another and is unbound by the constraints of conventional time; cf. Richardson (1990) 109–39, and note how Athena seems to float between the two strands of the story in Book xv.

[7] On similar storytelling techniques in the *Iliad*, see Morrison (1992), esp. 3–22, 95–108.

moment comes and makes it clear the Suitors will die at his hands (xiii.393–6), however, she does not tell him when the encounter will take place or how his victory will be achieved. Instead, she simply sends him off to Eumaios' hut, where he is to wait and inquire about 'everything' while she goes to Sparta after Telemachos (xiii.404, 411–3). Unless he disobeys her or something completely unforeseen occurs, therefore, his revenge will be taken independently and anonymously (cf. ii.175–6), and anyone who cooperates with him will do so without a full awareness of what he or she is involved in. As I have argued in detail in Chapter 6, this is precisely what happens with Eumaios, and very similar expectations prevail for the reunion with Telemachos, against whom Odysseus has been specifically disguised (xiii.402–3). Indeed, this seems at first to be the story Homer is telling.

When Eumaios introduces the Stranger to Telemachos and attempts to convert him into his master's ξεῖνος (xvi.62–7), the old man initially remains silent. After his son refuses to have him in the house out of fear of what might happen to him there (xvi.69–89), however, Odysseus breaks into the conversation and attacks not the Suitors for their outrages, but Telemachos for allowing them (xvi.91–111). This is an extremely provocative speech, which plays with the idea of denying the boy's paternity (xvi.100–1) and seems designed to evoke some sort of fiery response from him.[8] Were Telemachos to respond in a sufficiently aggressive manner, after all, he and the beggar, perhaps joined at some point by Eumaios, could begin to plot an attack, in which Odysseus would play an apparently secondary but in fact quite central role. Nor does the boy's (utterly unsurprising) failure to rise to the bait dangled before him here (esp. xvi.129) complicate matters appreciably. Odysseus can still enter the house unrecognized (xiii.402–3), after all, although he may now be forced to do so in the course of begging throughout the city, as he proposed to Eumaios earlier (xv.311–2). He will then be roundly abused by the Suitors (xiii.309–10), but will obtain an interview with Penelope (cf. xiv.115–32; xv.313–4), during the course of which he will test her feelings for him (xiii.335–6). After this, he will arm himself somehow and destroy his enemies with the active aid of Athena

[8] Telemachos only announces his identity explicitly at xvi.119–20, but it would seem to be apparent from the preceding conversation (cf. xvi.23–4 with xiv.174–80; xvi.67 with xiv.515–7 = xv.337–9).

(xiii.393–6), but apparently of no-one else. This is all entirely coherent, although most of the fine points of what is to come remain obscure, and there is no reason to expect an abrupt reversal of narrative direction now. The moment Eumaios leaves the hut on his mission to Penelope (xvi.154–5), however, Athena (and Homer) intervene unexpectedly in the story, ordering Odysseus to identify himself to his son and make plans for an assault upon the Suitors (xvi.155–70).

It is entirely possible that some of those listening to Homer's story realized in advance that Athena's insistence that Telemachos send Eumaios off to town with word of his arrival (xv.40–2) was intended not so much to deal with Penelope's terrible grief, already assuaged to some extent at iv.817–29, as to secure the swineherd's temporary absence from the hut so as to make a private recognition between father and son possible. Given the expectations created by the poet's own previous comments (xiii.190–3) and the goddess' explicit orders (xiii.308–9), however, this conclusion is obvious only in retrospect. In fact, what happens after Athena appears outside Eumaios' hut is utterly unexpected and abruptly alters everything: rather than carrying out his revenge unrecognized and alone, Odysseus is suddenly provided with an active ally and co-conspirator. In a completely underhanded fashion (cf. xiii.298–9), therefore, Homer has misled both his hero and his audience about how his story will reach its predetermined end, forcing them to confront the question once again. Athena (i.e. the singer) encourages this process by telling Odysseus that he and his son must 'devise death and doom for the Suitors' before heading off to the city (xvi.169–70), and the hero responds with a long and in many ways detailed plan (xvi.270–307). Once again, most of this proves to be in the first instance deliberate misdirection on the poet's part.

Odysseus begins by telling Telemachos to set off for town the next day at dawn, adding that he and Eumaios will follow a little later (xvi.270–3). This is by and large only a restatement of orders Athena

[9] The idea of separate entries into town is a slight clarification of the goddess' plan and presumably reflects Odysseus' own intentions and concerns, for if Telemachos brings him into the house himself, he will be under more pressure to protect him from the outrages which will certainly take place there (cf. xiii.310; xv.327–9; xvi.70–2, 85–7). As Odysseus is eager to prevent trouble from starting prematurely in this way (xvi.274–9), therefore, he arranges to enter the house separately as an anonymous common beggar, who is not entitled to quite so much protection or attention.

gave the two of them separately earlier (xv.40; xvi.169–70; cf. xv.308),[9] just as Odysseus' prediction that he will be abused in the house and his insistence that his son must put up with this (xvi.274–7) reflect what Athena told him on the beach (xiii.306–7, 310). At this point, however, Odysseus offers what seems at first to be some new information about what is to come in the story. Eventually Athena will inspire him to nod his head, he says, and after that his son should remove all the arms and armor from the hall, leaving behind only two spears, swords and shields (xvi.282–6, 295–6). If the Suitors notice the change, he is to offer them a deceptive story, rehearsed here in precise detail (xvi.286–94), and rely on Zeus and Athena to baffle their wits (xvi.297–8). Exactly as Athena ordered, all these preparations are to be made in absolute secrecy (xiii.308–9). Not even Penelope is to know her husband has returned (xvi.301–3), and as a result there should be occasion for testing the household's women (xvi.304; cf. xiii.335–6) and perhaps the men as well (xvi.305–7). In the end, he and Telemachos will rush up, grab the equipment which remains on the walls, and rout their enemies (xvi.295–7).

As Telemachos points out, the idea of testing the herdsmen (xvi.305–7) is not well-integrated with the rest of this plan and is apparently dropped as a result (xvi.311–9). Everything else Odysseus says makes reasonably good sense in light of the information Athena and Homer have given him so far, however, and can accordingly be taken seriously by Homer's audience. The timing of the secret nod is left dependent upon divine (i.e. authorial) inspiration (xvi.282–3), while the specific details of the attack remain sketchy (xvi.297). All the same, some relatively specific suggestions about the course of events to come have finally been put forward, and all of these have additional implications. In particular, the use of the aorist κατέθηκ(α) in the response to the Suitors planned at xvi.288–94 makes it apparent that Telemachos is to clear the hall of weapons while they are absent and be questioned by them on the following day, so that Odysseus' attack will most likely not take place for at least twenty-four hours after he returns to the palace. That Telemachos is to remove the arms and armor unassisted, moreover, implies his father expects to be unable to help him, perhaps because he will already have been driven out of the house for the night by the Suitors or their allies (xvi.276; cf. xviii.327–36; xix.66–9).[10] The fact that only enough

[10] Cf. Erbse (1972) 34.

equipment will be left for two men (xvi.295–6, with the emphatic νῶιν δ' οἴοισιν) and that no time will be wasted testing the herdsmen (xvi.311–4), finally, leaves little doubt that Odysseus and Telemachos alone are to participate in the attack upon their enemies. Despite his unquestionable loyalty, Eumaios' role in the story will apparently end after he leads the Stranger into town the next day (xvi.272).[11]

The first steps in this plan take place almost exactly as projected. At dawn Telemachos heads off for home and eventually joins the Suitors at a feast there (xvii.1–6, 328–35; cf. xvi.270–1); somewhat later in the day Eumaios and the Stranger follow him into town (xvii.182–203; cf. xvi.272–3), and once within the house Odysseus is indeed abused with missiles (xvii.462–3; xviii.394–6; cf. xvi.277) and threatened with being dragged out of the hall (xvii.479–80; xviii.11–2; cf. xvi.276).[12] From the beginning of Book xix on, however, the actual course of events in the story begins to diverge drastically from the plan the hero articulates in Eumaios' hut. In particular, the projected secret nod (xvi.282–3) is never given, but the hall is nonetheless cleared of weapons as soon as the Suitors depart in the evening (xix.1–34; cf. xvi.284–6). Not only do Odysseus and Telemachos work together carrying out this task (contrast σύ xvi.283–6), however, but they leave no arms behind for themselves (contrast xvi.295–7).[13] It is clear that Odysseus does not understand the precise nature of Athena's plans for him, so that at xviii.125–50, for example, he makes a long speech to Amphinomos, whose obvious implication and intent is that this apparently decent young man leave the house before it is too late (esp. xviii.146–50), whereas Athena absolutely refuses to spare him (xviii.153–6).[14] It is also true that as a limited mortal character

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[11] As noted in Chapter 6, the fact that Homer allows Eumaios the long autobiographical tale in xv.403–84 suggests he has a more substantial role in mind for the swineherd all along (esp. xxii.114–5), but even the perceptive few among the poet's audience who suspected this at that point would have no proof that they were right.

[12] For Odysseus' defeat of Iros as a foreshadowing of the destruction of the Suitors, see Levine (1982), but note that nothing in that scene suggests specifically how that destruction will come about.

[13] Among the most important recent discussions of the treatment of the arms are Page (1955) 92–8; Erbse (1972) 3–41, esp. 33–6; Combellack (1973) 17–32; Fenik (1974) 111–4; the question is ignored by Duckworth (1933). For an overview of older analytic approaches to the problem, see Erbse (1972) 5–8; cf. Goold (1986).

[14] Cf. xvii.360–4, where Homer says Athena rouses Odysseus up to beg among the Suitors and thus discover which of them are decent men (xvii.363), but adds that she herself has no intention of sparing any of them (xvii.364). The most economical reading of the passage is that xvii.363 represents Odysseus' intentions as he

the hero cannot know precisely what will happen in the future or plan for every eventuality.[15] Neither fact explains the poet's willingness to allow him to draw up detailed plans he will not carry out, however, and were we witnessing a rational process of improvisation and rethinking which was intended to be understood as such, we might have expected that these changes would be made for obvious and self-evident reasons (which they are not) or that Odysseus or the poet would comment on or explain them (as they fail to do).[16] Nor can one argue that such questions would never have occurred to Homer's audience, for he himself raises the issue by framing the removal of the arms in Book xix with the repeated assertion that his hero was working together with Athena (cf. xix.33–4) to devise destruction for the Suitors (xix.2, 52). Most commentators have accordingly argued that the scene represents a blunder on the part of the poet (or his redactor), and traces of several variant versions of the story, crudely and carelessly spliced together, are routinely detected in the text.[17] Given Homer's apparent eagerness to call attention to the difficulties he has created, however, all this is better understood as further deliberate false preparation of a sort I have argued is typical of this half of the poem as a whole: once again we have been led to imagine and anticipate action which does not take place (xvi.282–97) and then, when those expectations are reversed, left in suspense as to what is to come next.[18] Homer himself has apparently already

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understands them, while xvii.364 is what Athena (and the audience) know will happen. For the contrast between Odysseus and Athena in this scene, see Doherty (1991), esp. 40.

[15] Cf. Woodhouse (1930) 162–4; Russo, in Russo, Fernández-Galiano and Heubeck (1992) ad xix.1–50. This explanation is at least as old as Eustathius (cited by Combellack [1973] 19 n. 1); note the objections registered by Erbse (1972) 7–8; Fenik (1974) 112. Büchner (1932), followed by Erbse (1972) 33–41, argues that Odysseus' detailed plans in Book xvi are intended only to reassure Telemachos and suggests the hero actually has no idea what will happen in his house; when he eventually discovers he will be allowed to spend the night there, on the other hand, he takes what then seems to be the obvious course of action. None of this is obvious from the text, and Telemachos already appears considerably heartened at xvi.263–5, before his father outlines his plan. In any case, Odysseus' actions at the beginning of Book xix still make no sense under this thesis, as Erbse (1972) 36–41, seems to concede.

[16] Cf. Woodhouse (1930) 165–6.

[17] Thus Monro (1901) ad xix.1–50; Woodhouse (1930) 169–70, 176–7; Page (1955) 94–5; Stanford (1958–59) ad xix.1–50; Combellack (1973) 26–7.

[18] Compare Page (1955) 92–8, who senses the effect the articulation of Odysseus' plan in Book xvi has on the listener, but draws conclusions very different from my own.

decided to introduce the contest of the bow in the following scene and, since he can arm Odysseus in that way, has seen his way clear to dispose of all the weapons in the hall. He has not dropped any substantial clues to that effect within the narrative, however, but has instead left his listeners baffled, and indeed attempted to tantalize them with the problem of what he (i.e. Athena) and his hero are up to and of how any of this can be leading to the repeatedly promised attack on the Suitors.[19] If Odysseus himself has any motivation for what he is doing in this scene, that is to say, it is left obscure, and while this is maddening for anyone concerned to develop a precise and consistent catalogue of the hero's intentions, the narrative strategy is a brilliant one. As Odysseus tells Telemachos as he sends him off to bed, the gods (which is to say, on a slightly different level, the narrator) have their own ways, into which one ought not to (and in fact cannot) inquire too closely (xix.36–43). That the answer to the riddle Homer poses may have something to do with the upcoming interview with Penelope (cf. xvii.569–84) seems a reasonable assumption. That scene as well, however, contains a host of serious difficulties, which continue to obscure the question of precisely how Odysseus will take his revenge.

Throughout the first two-thirds of the *Odyssey*, Penelope is something of a mystery, if not a particularly interesting one. According to Antinoos, she is beyond all other women in cleverness (esp. ii.87–92, 115–26) and in fact managed to hold the Suitors off for three full years with the trick of Laertes' shroud (ii.93–110), but an end was eventually put to that and nowhere in Books i–xvii does she display any particular resourcefulness.[20] Instead, her primary function in the story is to weep and mourn and make occasional piteous complaints about her own situation and the wretched behavior and insensitivity of others (i.328–44; iv.680–766, 787–823; xvi.409–33; xvii.36–43,

[19] Note in addition that Homer has specifically forecast at xviii.155–6 that Amphinomos will die by a spear-wound at the hands of Telemachos. Fenik (1974) 123–4, raises a generic objection to explanations of this sort, arguing that a willingness to assign responsibility for apparent contradictions in the text to authorial cleverness rather than confusion makes possible "an equally facile justification of *any* incoherence, no matter how extreme." This is both a useful methodological *caveat* (in that the possibility that even Homer nods from time to time cannot be excluded) and an obvious *reductio ad absurdum* (since some explanations of this sort may be compelling even if others are obscurant).

[20] Marquardt (1985) considerably overestimates the deliberateness of the choices which have led Penelope to her current dilemma.

101–6), after which she inevitably retreats upstairs to cry, pray and sleep (e.g. i.360–4; iv.759–66, 787–94; xvi.449–51; xvii.58–60; cf. xvii.101–4). Everyone else in the poem, meanwhile, either conspires to keep her as naive as possible or treats her as a simultaneously valuable and threatening object, which exists only to be manipulated and controlled. When Penelope attempts to interfere in what Telemachos takes to be his own business, for example, he silences her and sends her to her own quarters (i.346–59; xvii.46–56; cf. xxi.344–53) and never tells her all his plans or everything he knows (esp. ii.373–6; xvii.108–49), while the Suitors plot behind her back (esp. iv.768–77) and lie bold-faced when she reproaches them for their actions (xvi.409–48, esp. 448). Even her own servants keep secrets from and deceive her (ii.107–9, 373–7; cf. iv.729–49), and the same is apparently true of all the various wanderers who make their way to the island (xiv.126–7). Penelope is thus a largely naive and strikingly ineffective character in the first two-thirds of the *Odyssey* (cf. xv.515–7; xix.134–5), and whatever happens on Ithaca or even within her own halls, she and the even more isolated Laertes are generally the last to learn of it (esp. iv.729–41, 754; xvi.130–52). Her own personal situation, meanwhile, has grown increasingly desperate. On the one hand, her husband has vanished without a trace (cf. i.241–2), and although she retains the ability to imagine and wish for his return (e.g. xvii.539–47) and is eager to learn anything about him that she can (i.415–6; iv.831–4; xiv.126–8; xvii.44, 104–6, 508–11; xix.94–5), he shows no sign of coming back to her.[21] Even worse, she is surrounded by the Suitors, all of whom she loathes (xvii.499), although some are more repulsive than others (xvi.397–8; xvii.500), and to whom she is apparently free to say 'yes' but not 'no' (esp. i.249–50 = xvi.126–7). The price of holding them at bay, moreover, is the gradual destruction of her son's estate (e.g. ii.55–8, 125–8), and he himself is now in mortal danger (esp. iv.698–705; xvi.409–23). Penelope accordingly has no easy choices left and, as the image of the baffled and encircled lion which the poet applies to her at iv.791–3 seems designed to make clear, although she has not yet surrendered to her enemies, she is in a very difficult situation and has good reason for despair. Nor is her position altered or improved

[21] Katz (1991) 105, 116, mistranslates xvii.547, disregarding κε and thus mistaking Penelope's remark for a straightforward assertion that Odysseus will return; cf. Smyth § 1793; K-G ii.392.1.

in any way by events in Book xvii.[22] As Thornton in particular has pointed out, Telemachos' third-hand account of Odysseus' captivity with Kalypso, to the extent it is believable at all, makes no mention of any possibility he might escape her (esp. xvii.143–6), while Theoklymenos' prophecy (xvii.152–61) can seem to Penelope "nothing but the unproven word of a stranger."[23] That another wanderer is in the house with tales of her vanished husband, finally, is of interest to her (xvii.508–11) but scarcely a unique or surprising occurrence (esp. xiv.126–7), and in and of itself means little or nothing.

Up through the end of Book xvii, therefore, Penelope plays an essentially secondary and largely undeveloped role in the *Odyssey*, although Athena does testify again at xiii.380–1 to her cleverness in holding off the Suitors with false promises, and there seems no reason to anticipate any sudden, significant action on her part. At xviii.158–62, however, the goddess unexpectedly stirs Penelope up to make an appearance in the hall, where she tells the Suitors that when Odysseus left for Troy, he bid her remarry once Telemachos was grown, announces her decision to take a husband now that that condition has been fulfilled (xviii.257–73), solicits gifts (xviii.274–80) and, after receiving them, abruptly withdraws again into her chambers (xviii.302–3).[24] Precisely what is going on here and in particular

[22] For Penelope and her dilemma in the final third of the the poem, see esp. Thornton (1970) 93–108; Murnaghan (1987a) 103–15. For the very similar dilemma faced by real widows in a later period, see Walcot (1991).

[23] Thornton (1970) 100; cf. Erbse (1972) 85–6; Eisenberger (1973) 271; Emlyn-Jones (1984) 3–5; *contra* Büchner (1940) 139. Katz (1991) 104, fails to translate αἴ γάρ plus the optative in xvii.163 correctly (i.e. as an emphatic wish, without any judgment expressed as to whether the imagined action will take place; e.g. iv.341–5; vi.244–5; viii.339–42; K-G ii.570.1 n. 1) and thus mistakes Penelope's meaning.

[24] That the motives described in xviii.160–2 are those of Athena rather than Penelope was seen long ago; cf. Büchner (1940) 143; Russo, in Russo, Fernández-Galiano and Heubeck (1992) ad xviii.160–2. Büchner goes on to argue (141–4) that Penelope's laugh (xviii.163) marks her pleasure in the deception he believes she is planning, and Levine (1983) expands this thesis, offering Dodds (1951) 1–18, in support of the idea that Homer's attribution of responsibility for Penelope's decision to Athena is not to be taken literally. In fact, Dodds' point is very much the opposite, *viz.* that Homer's contemporaries would have recognized immediately that Penelope was not responsible for this strange, invasive idea, although she would have had to live with its consequences. With the exception of ix.413 (where it is actually the hero's κῆρ which laughs, rather than the hero himself), moreover, Levine's alleged parallels from the *Odyssey* are not compelling; v.180 and xiii.287 involve only smiling, and that at the wiliness of another individual rather than of oneself, while Telemachos' laugh at xxi.105 is probably a response to Antinoos' unintentionally comic remarks at xxi.93–5 rather than a spontaneous outburst of self-absorbed joy;

whether Penelope is serious about remarrying or merely stalling for time has been a matter of considerable scholarly dispute.[25] Because she and Odysseus are purely fictional characters, of course, there is no reality behind the text to which one can appeal to test the truth of her description of the past and thus no point in asking whether he 'really said' what she claims he did; the matter is by definition obscure.[26] Nor can her revelation a little later on that she has indeed run out of wiles (xix.157–8) and is prepared to remarry the next day (xix.571–81) be taken into account by an audience listening to the story unfold from one end to the other and unable to rely on fixed written texts like our own. In fact, Eumaios insists only a few Books earlier that Penelope shows no sign of wanting to take a new husband (xvi.37–9), and when Athena prepares Odysseus for the situation he will encounter on Ithaca, she tells him specifically that his wife is in the habit of keeping the Suitors hopeful and obtaining gifts from them without actually desiring to remarry (xiii.379–81; cf. ii.89–92). This is entirely compatible with what goes on here and is in fact how Odysseus himself (obviously under the influence of his divine patroness' remarks) understands the action (xviii.281–3).[27] Nor does

cf. Olson (1994). Quite frequently in the second half of the poem, in fact, laughter is a sign of a feeling of well-being mixed up with a general lack of appreciation for one's real circumstances (esp. xiv.463–6; xviii.110–7; xx.345–83, 390–4; cf. xxi.103–5), and that interpretation fits perfectly with Penelope's behavior here: she does not understand what is going on (cf. xviii.158–60), but for some reason showing herself to the Suitors now appeals to her (xviii.164–5). On ἀχρεῖον δ' ἐγέλασσεν (xviii.163), see Clay (1984) 73–6, with the response of Russo (1992) ad loc.

[25] The most useful discussions of the scene are Büchner (1940) 137–46; Hölscher (1967a) 27–33, expanded and adapted in Hölscher (1978); Erbse (1972) 79–89; Byre (1988). That Penelope is being deliberately deceptive is the opinion of Büchner (1940) 139–43; Levine (1983); Marquardt (1985) 39–41; and Winkler (1990) 146–7; that she sincerely intends to remarry is argued by Page (1955) 125; Thornton (1970) 97–8; Erbse (1972) 81–7; and Byre (1988) 162–3. For a vigorous restatement of the traditional analyst argument that this portion of Book xviii is an ill-adapted fragment of an *Odyssey* in which Penelope recognized her husband early on and plotted with him to destroy the Suitors, see Page (1955) 122–9.

[26] *Contra* Büchner (1940) 139–41, followed by Winkler (1990) 147; for the documentary fallacy, see Waldock (1951) 11–24. This is true even if stories of Odysseus' departure from Ithaca were known to some of those in Homer's audience, for even if such tales existed, they undoubtedly differed in detail, so that the poet could not take any one version for granted. Had he wished to make it clear whether Penelope was telling the truth here, therefore, he would have needed to include this detail in his own story at some earlier point, e.g. at xi.447–9, where questions of marital fidelity and endurance are already to the fore. Instead, he has left the question open.

[27] *Pace* Büchner (1940) 139–44; Levine (1983) 172–8; and Winkler (1990) 147,

Penelope say anything at all about when the wedding-night she claims to envision will be or how she will choose her new husband (esp. xviii.272–3), as one might have expected, were she serious about her proposal.[28] None of this is decisive and, as the deeply divided modern critical reaction to the scene makes clear, one cannot know for certain what is going on here. Indeed, the larger point must be that this is once again a deliberate (and very effective) storytelling strategy: precisely because Penelope's behavior does not make easy or obvious sense, Homer's audience is forced to await her upcoming interview with the Stranger (esp. xvii.569–70) very much with bated breath.[29]

Odysseus' interview with Penelope has been anticipated since at least Book xi, where Agamemnon tells his old friend not to be too tender (ἤπιος) with his wife or share all his counsels with her (xi.441–3). When Athena meets Odysseus on the beach, moreover, she disguises him specifically in order that Penelope might not know him until he has taken his revenge (xiii.190–3, 400–3), tells him not to identify himself to anyone (xiii.308–9) and praises what she characterizes, in a sort of indirect command, as his desire to test his wife before pushing his plans any further (xiii.335–6). In addition, Odysseus tells Eumaios early on that he is eager to offer the queen stories of her lost husband (xv.313–4; cf. xiv.126–7), and it is with precisely

therefore, there is no need to search for some logical means by which Odysseus could know what his wife is thinking despite not having spoken with her; he is merely operating on information he has been given earlier and has leaped to a conclusion which the poet is happy to have his external audience share. As Byre (1988) 161, points out, Odysseus' joy (γήθησεν) at xviii.281 can scarcely reflect his awareness that everything his wife is saying about his behavior before he left for Troy is false and thus his certainty that she will not remarry (*pace* Büchner [1940] 141), since she could be telling a false story to justify a real decision; cf. Erbse (1972) 79–82.

[28] That Telemachos has indeed reached ἥβη, just as Penelope observes (xviii.269–71; cf. xviii.217), does not prove that anything else she says is true. That she refuses to make herself beautiful in order to appeal to the Suitors (xviii.178–81), on the other hand, does not rule out the possibility that she intends to deceive them, since it is clear they are attracted to her in any case (esp. i.365–6).

[29] Felson-Rubin (1987) shows a keen appreciation for the ambiguity of Penelope's behavior in this scene and elsewhere, but is concerned to 'make sense' of her actions and motivations in a way which is fundamentally literary and thus inappropriate to an oral poem. Katz (1991) 92–3, seems to feel that any effort to make sense of Penelope's behavior is a mistake; my point is that this is precisely what Homer expects and intends his audience to do. For the encounter between Odysseus and Penelope in Book xix, see esp. Büchner (1940) 146–50; Vester (1968); Emlyn-Jones (1984). Russo, in Russo, Fernández-Galiano and Heubeck (1992) 7–9, offers a broad overview of recent discussions of the scene.

this in mind that she arranges to speak with him once he is in the house (xvii.508–29, 549–50; cf. xvii.553–63). For all one can tell, therefore, this ought to be a strictly anonymous interview, in which Odysseus offers his wife another of his lying, pseudo-autobiographical stories, including predictions of his own return (cf. xvii.525–7), and then engages in some aggressive questioning of her.[30] Penelope's speech at xviii.257–73 has raised the possibility that she may be thinking of remarriage, while the odd and disturbing treatment of the arms at the beginning of Book xix has thrown everything to come into another sort of shadow. All the same, neither Odysseus himself nor anyone listening to Homer's tale can possibly know that the scene which follows will end up how and where it does.

The first significant revelation in this interview is Penelope's admission that, appearances aside (cf. xviii.281–3), she is no longer able to discover any means by which to resist the marriage being pressed on her from all directions (xix.157–8). Although her affairs have obviously reached a crisis of some sort, however, there is no indication at the beginning of the scene that she has any immediate intention of acting to resolve the situation. All Odysseus needs, therefore, is for her to hold out against the Suitors for one day longer, and he accordingly does his best to convince her that her husband will be

[30] Virtually all responsible critics now reject the arguments of Harsh (1950), who believes Penelope recognizes Odysseus early on but fails to say so, and claims to be able to interpret the allegedly veiled and allusive exchange between husband and wife here. Unfortunately, Harsh's approach has been revived in many of its essentials by Winkler (1990) 147–56, who suggests Penelope should perhaps be understood as extremely cunning and powerful but forced by the presence of her maids (xix.60) to disguise her recognition of her husband. Although the maids do enter the hall shortly after their mistress, however, Homer says expressly that they immediately set to work about the room (xix.61–4), and they are therefore not sitting next to Penelope watching her as she interviews the beggar. (That Eurykleia is seated nearby [cf. xix.357] is specifically explained by Penelope's remark that she is no longer good for heavy work [xix.356].) Nor is it the case that everyone present in the hall automatically hears whatever is said there, as Winkler seems to believe, for the maids would then certainly report the stunning announcement with which the scene closes (xix.571–81) to their lovers among the Suitors that night (cf. xx.6–7), as the course of the conversation on the next day makes it clear that they do not (esp. xx.326–44). Nor could Eurykleia's discovery of her master's scar and the uproar (xix.469–70) and brief exchange between the two which follow (xix.479–502) have passed unnoticed, as they obviously do, if some degree of interpersonal privacy were not possible in the hall; note the parallel action at i.132–5; xvi.335–9. Had Penelope recognized Odysseus and wished to make secret plans with him to attack the Suitors, she could have done so. Instead, Athena (and Homer) go to great lengths to keep her ignorant of the Stranger's true identity (xix.478–9), and the Harsh/Winkler theory must continue to be rejected.

returning momentarily (xix.269–307, esp. 300–7). She for her part refuses to believe him (xix.312–4; cf. xix.257–60), but once again does not suggest that she will act at once on her convictions. Instead, she abruptly and somewhat unexpectedly orders that the Stranger be given a bath (xix.317). Anyone in Homer's audience who remembers the story told in Book iv about how Odysseus disguised himself as a servant or beggar in order to infiltrate Troy and was recognized by Helen, who bathed him and convinced him to tell her of his plans (esp. iv.247–56), may already feel some apprehension or anticipation here.[31] Although Athena initially made it clear Odysseus was not to identify himself to his wife (xiii.308–9), after all, she reversed the same order in the case of Telemachos (xvi.168), and it is at least conceivable that she might now do the same thing once again. Even if the echoes of Helen's story are too distant to have much effect here, however, the poet begins to toy explicitly with the idea of recognition, first by allowing Penelope to remark that the Stranger is precisely the same age as her husband, who must by now resemble him in hands and feet (xix.358–60), and then by having Eurykleia insist the old man looks more like her absent master than any other wanderer who ever made his way to Ithaca (xix.379–81).[32] Odysseus artfully fends the suggestion off, calling this a common thing to say (xix.383–5), and at this tense and somewhat baffling moment, as the hero's supposedly impenetrable disguise (esp. xiii.397) seems to be dissolving, Eurykleia begins to wash her master's feet and Homer raises the problem of the scar (xix.386–91).[33]

[31] For the conflicting echoes in this scene of the stories told by Helen and Menelaos in Book iv, see most recently Olson (1989a); Katz (1991) 78–80.

[32] As Büchner (1931) 132, pointed out long ago, Odysseus' refusal to be washed by one of the younger women is carefully motivated by the abuse Melantho directs at him in xix.65–9; cf. Köhnken (1976) 102–4. On the irony implicit in Penelope's failure to recognize Odysseus here, see Vester (1968) 419–21.

[33] For useful corrections of the overly influential discussion of this passage by Auerbach (1957) 1–20, esp. 1–5, see Köhnken (1976); Lynn-George (1988) 1–49; Rutherford (1992) ad xix.390–1. For a rich and intriguing discussion of the significance of the tale of the scar, see Peradotto (1990) 120–70. de Jong (1985), largely anticipated by Austin (1966) 310–1, argues that the appearance of the verb (ἔ)γνω at both the end and the beginning of this passage (xix.392, 468) is a signal we are to take this story as a sudden recollection on the part of Eurykleia. Had Homer really intended the passage to be understood that way, however, he could have included Eurykleia in the audience for Odysseus' report to his parents about his adventures (xix.462–6) rather than leaving this up to the listener's imagination. As it is, the incident merely conforms to a standard Homeric pattern of homecoming (e.g. xi.223–4; xvii.44, 68–70, 104–6; xxiii.306–41) and, as Köhnken 107–8, points out, the real

It is possible that Odysseus' scar, like his cleverness and skill at dissembling (ix.19–20; xiii.297–8), was a basic, traditional part of his identity.[34] If that is true, however, there are substantial difficulties with the action in Book xviii, where the hero ties his rags up around his waist (xviii.66–8) but none of the on-lookers, including Eurymachos, who earlier claims to have sat on these same knees as a boy (xvi.442–4), guesses who he is, despite the fact that they stare directly at his legs (xviii.72–4). Nor is there any indication in the text that the external audience is expected to be disturbed or amused by this omission (contrast i.405–20), as they ought to be if the scar is in fact a standard part of the story. The best that is generally said of Odysseus (and Homer) here is accordingly once again that he has blundered (cf. xix.388–91) by refusing to have his feet washed by one of the younger servant-women rather than by Eurykleia, who he ought to have known was likely to be chosen for the task, and indeed by sitting next to the fire in the first place.[35] More likely, this is to approach the problem backwards, for as far as anyone within or without the story knows, Odysseus has no scar on his leg before xix.391.[36] Although the inset tale of the origin of the hero's name and his journey to Parnassos and encounter with the boar there (xix.393–466) has many functions within the narrative, after all, its most basic role is to explain what it is that Eurykleia discovers and thus how she recognizes her long-lost master. This is not a failure either of Homer's artistry or of Odysseus' intelligence, therefore, although it does suit the poet's purposes to justify his own manipulation of the action by hinting at the latter (esp. xix.390–1). Instead, the scar is an innovation and Eurykleia, as well as the audience for whom the poem was intended, if not the far too well-informed modern professional reader, discovers its existence and thus its significance only as it is mentioned here. Naturally this is a shock to everyone

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reason the story of the scar is reserved for now is that it is only with Eurykleia's recognition of it that it assumes significance, and that in turn is the reason for the emphatic, repeated presence of (ἔ)γνω here.

[34] On a wily skill at dissembling as part of Odysseus' traditional character, see Stanford (1954) 8–24. For the scar as traditional, see Peradotto (1990) 146.

[35] Thus Büchner (1931) 131–2; Thornton (1970) 102; Erbse (1972) 95; Eisenberger (1973) 265.

[36] Cf. the way the poet handles Eurykleia, whose presence in the hall is not mentioned before xix.353–8, after Odysseus has requested a footbath at the hands of 'some old woman' (xix.344–8), at which point it is too late to do anything about the problem she suddenly and unexpectedly represents.

involved, and Homer exploits that fact by drawing out his explanation to a remarkable length (xix.393–466), forcing his listeners to spend approximately seventy lines wondering what the consequences of this obviously very important (cf. xix.389–91) revelation will be.

Had Penelope recognized her husband in this scene, the rest of Homer's story would presumably have differed radically from the version preserved for us today.[37] Indeed, Eurykleia actually turns to her mistress to tell her what she has seen (xix.476–7) and for a single heart-stopping moment it seems as if Homer's tale is about to veer off once again in an unanticipated and potentially very dangerous direction. Before that can happen, however, the poet, once more in the guise of Athena, intervenes to turn Penelope's attention away (xix.478–9) and leaves Odysseus only with another unexpected confidant and ally in his old servant-woman. This might be taken as a potential answer to the puzzle posed by the treatment of the arms at the beginning of the Book: somehow Eurykleia will bring her master weapons at the crucial moment.[38] The interview with Penelope, on the other hand, is clearly winding to its close; she now declares herself almost ready to go to bed (xix.509–10), suggests she still has no idea what to do (xix.524–9) and rejects the Stranger's encouraging interpretation of her dream (xix.560–9).[39] For all one can tell, she is ready to go off to weep and mourn for one night more, leaving her

[37] Amory (1965); Austin (1975) 205–35; and Russo (1982) 4–11, and in Russo, Fernández-Galiano and Heubeck (1992) 9–12, all posit that Penelope recognizes Odysseus on some unconscious level over the course of this scene. Cf. Emlyn-Jones (1984) 3–8, and Murnaghan (1987a) 111–4, on the generic problems with approaches of this sort. Austin (1975) 214–21, characterizes the action here as quiet seduction and flirtation, but this is brutally insensitive to the real situation of Penelope, who is weeping and sick at heart (esp. xix.204–9, 249–50, 510–7) and facing up at last to the horror of giving up Odysseus and entering another man's bed (e.g. xix.577–81). The pleasure of love and sex is the furthest thing from her mind, and it does her no justice to suggest otherwise.

[38] Cf. xix.399–406, where Eurykleia in fact usurps what one would otherwise take to be her mistress' place at an important point in Odysseus' life.

[39] Note once again that, although the basic significance of this dream is almost painfully obvious (cf. xix.555–8), nothing in it or in Odysseus' gloss upon it offers any clue as to precisely how he will kill the Suitors. For Penelope's own (discouraged) interpretation of the dream, see Pratt (1994). *Pace* Katz (1991) 116–7, Penelope nowhere presents her dream as "a rationale for waiting" to remarry, and her rejection of the Stranger's insistence that it means her husband is returning is scarcely inexplicable; that he saw Odysseus once twenty years earlier (xix.221–48) proves nothing about either the truthfulness of his other claims (xix.269–307) or his abilities as a prophet (xix.555–8), and she has been taken in by this sort of thing many times before (esp. xiv.126–30).

husband to plan his attack in a fashion which has yet to be revealed. At this point, at the very end of the evening, when no further surprises or developments can reasonably be anticipated, Penelope makes a sudden, largely unanticipated announcement: tomorrow she will set a contest for the Suitors, and whoever can string Odysseus' bow most easily and shoot an arrow through the axes will win her hand in marriage (xix.570–81).[40]

Up to this point, Odysseus has been attempting to convince his wife to delay her decision to remarry (esp. xix.300–7). Now, however, he abruptly reverses course and encourages her to do what she has just proposed (xix.583–7). As the turmoil in his heart a few lines later (xx.25–30, 38–40) makes clear, he has as yet no idea of the use to which he will put the bow, and if a consistent explanation for his behavior here must be sought, it is presumably that he realizes the Suitors will be unable to complete the task Penelope intends to set them (cf. xxi.184–5).[41] As for Homer's external audience, it is possible that at least some of them know an attack on the Suitors with a bow as a canonical part of the tale of Odysseus' return. Telemachos'

[40] The timing of this decision has always troubled unitarian critics of the *Odyssey*. For a careful statement of the problem, see Combellack (1973) 32–9; Russo, in Russo, Fernández-Galiano and Heubeck (1992) ad xix.572–81, briefly sketches out some of the traditional solutions. In fact, Penelope acts for relatively straightforward, textually explicit reasons. Throughout the first two-thirds of the story, virtually the only thing which happens to her is that she is repeatedly forced to confront the fact that the Suitors have decided to kill Telemachos (esp. iv.698–705; xvi.409–33; cf. xvii.36–43), whom they see as standing in the way of her remarriage (esp. xvi.371–3). She has no idea that they have put their plans temporarily on hold (esp. xvi.400–6), for they have grown more careful about keeping their counsels to themselves (xvi.361–2; contrast iv.677–8), and as a result, in Book xvi Medon can only repeat the bad news he gave her earlier (xvi.411–2; cf. iv.700–1). All she knows is that Telemachos is back in immediate, day-to-day contact with his enemies (cf. xviii.166–8), and although her decision to set the contest of the bow is unanticipated, like many such surprises in the *Odyssey* it makes perfect sense in retrospect: by marrying one of the Suitors she can help ensure her son's survival, whereas if she continues to delay he will inevitably be destroyed. Cf. Büchner (1940) 138–40; Rutherford (1992) 31–2. Allione (1963) 70 n. 12, followed by Katz (1991) 83, objects that Homer shows the Suitors plotting again against Telemachos on the next day (xx.241–2), despite Penelope's announcement in Book xviii, and accordingly goes on to seek the queen's motivations elsewhere, in her own increasingly difficult situation (63–79 *passim*). Since Penelope has actually said nothing definite to the Suitors yet about her remarriage, however, they are entirely justified in proceeding as if nothing has changed (cf. ii.89–92; xiii.379–81) and Telemachos must still be eliminated. The announcement of the bow-contest, on the other hand, will seemingly amount to complete acquiescence in their demands and can be expected to alter their behavior radically.

[41] Cf. Büchner (1940) 147.

name ('Fighter from afar') makes it clear his father's association with archery was an old and potent one (cf. i.260–2), after all, and Odysseus boasts at length to the Phaeacians of his skill at this in particular (viii.215–22).[42] All the same, nothing in the text obviously suggests that an ending of this sort is looming over the tale from the very first, and the poet's ability and willingness to play repeatedly on the question implies quite the opposite. Odysseus' *aporia* at xx.24–30, 38–40, at any rate, is patently designed to suggest events will turn out in a way which cannot yet be anticipated, and the fact that the bow is to be part of the apparatus of the wedding-contest and will not be tried by anyone at random (esp. xix.576) would seem to count against the likelihood of it falling into the hands of the Stranger (cf. xxi.232–5, 273–379).[43] At the very least, therefore, Homer suggests that this particular version of Odysseus' return may still end in an unexpected fashion.[44]

This process of keeping the poem's audience off-balance continues through Book xx and into xxi, as one surprise follows rapidly after another. Philoitios' appearance in the house (xx.185–6), first of all, is completely unanticipated, while his declaration of his willingness to fight for Odysseus were he to return (xx.236–7) raises an idea apparently rejected outright four Books earlier: that in the final battle the hero might be assisted not just by his son, but by loyal herdsmen as well (cf. xvi.305–15).[45] Nor do the Suitors notice the disappearance of the arms from the hall until it is much too late (cf. xxii.23–5), despite Odysseus' repeated implication that they would (xvi.286–98; xix.5–13). Telemachos, meanwhile, acts in a consistently provocative manner (xx.257–67, 281–3, 303–19), presumably because he too does not know how or when the fighting will begin (cf. xx.384–6), although he would prefer that it be sooner rather than later (cf.

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[42] Cf. Stanford (1954) 71.

[43] Note that Odysseus' closing words to Penelope can at least be taken to suggest that his attack will precede the contest rather than follow it (xix.585–7).

[44] Cf. Erbse (1972) 36–7.

[45] Although Eumaios does not normally come into town with animals for the Suitors (esp. xiv.372–4; xv.374–6; cf. xiv.26–7), Telemachos has ordered him to appear today (xvii.600), so that his arrival at xx.162–3 is not unexpected. This does not necessarily suggest he will take part in the fighting, however, and even at xx.236–9 he fails to repeat Philoitios' pledge of active support for Odysseus in battle. Melanthios' arrival at the house is also no surprise, given Eumaios' earlier insistence that he spends too much time in town (xvii.245–6) and the poet's own comment that the same men brought in animals every day (xvii.171; note also xiv.103–6).

xvi.313–5).[46] As a result, it is never clear when or whether his actions and remarks will lead to an explosion, but the Suitors for their part pay unexpected heed to his words (xx.271–2, 322–5; contrast xvi.278–80) and fail to rise up in anger against him and his guest. Everything thus depends on Odysseus, and it gradually becomes clear that he is waiting for the intervention of Athena (and the poet) in the story (cf. xvi.282) and so, it turns out, for the appearance of Penelope (xxi.1–4).

At the beginning of Book xxi, Homer makes a sudden and striking shift in narrative strategy, referring to the the bow and axes Penelope fetches from the storeroom as not only 'contest materials' (ἀέθλια) but also 'the beginning of the slaughter' (φόνου ἀρχήν) (xxi.4), associating the bow with the idea of murdering one's guests (xxi.27–30), and then a few lines later asserting outright that Antinoos would be 'the first to taste an arrow from Odysseus' hands' (xxi.98–9; cf. xxi.417–8). The attack on the Suitors is coming so shortly, it seems, that there is little to be gained by continued coyness, and we are instead allowed to watch the action unfold from a somewhat more privileged perspective. Even now, however, the poet keeps much of what is to come in shadow, for although Odysseus makes a final set of (for once largely effective and accurate) plans with his servants (xxi.230–41; cf. xxi.378–91), he still does not tell them (or Homer's auditors) how he will organize and begin the attack itself, and says nothing about when or even whether Telemachos, Philoitios and Eumaios will be armed (cf. xxii.101–15). Instead, everyone within and without the poem is left to stare at him and to wonder how he will make his move and what will happen then (cf. xx.385–6; xxi.392–403), as he slowly turns the bow about, fits it with a string, in the process spontaneously imitating the poet responsible for all this tension (xxi.406–11), and prepares to compete in what will be a very bloody contest (esp. xxi.417–8).[47]

It is at least theoretically possible that Homer was initially certain only that his hero would kill the Suitors and changed his mind from time to time about how this would happen, producing the problems and patterns I have traced above. From at least the beginning of

[46] Note in particular Odysseus' need to intervene at the last moment to stop his son from stringing the bow himself (xxi.128–9), which shows as clearly as possible that the two do not share a common sense of what they are doing. See also Roisman (1994) 19–21.

[47] For the poet's self-identification with his hero here, cf. Stewart (1976) 158–9.

Book xix, however, it is clear he knows exactly what he is doing but does not intend to share his secret until he must, and it seems a reasonable hypothesis that this is true from the very first.[48] Be that as it may, the story of Odysseus' return holds the attention of its audience in large part by baffling and misleading them, thus forcing them to pay constant, anxious attention to what is to come. The most important question which remains is why Homer was so concerned to tell this particular tale in this particular way. I accordingly conclude this book with three separate, complementary readings of the significance of the hero's return to Ithaca. I begin, I trust somewhat unexpectedly, with Book I of the *Iliad*.

[48] Indeed, it is tempting in retrospect to see a suggestive early echo of the attack in Book xxii at i.255–66, as the disguised Athena (standing in to some extent for the poet) not only imagines Odysseus routing his enemies armed with helmet, shield and spears, but also speaks of his murderous arrows in the specific context of a feast, held upon his return from a journey abroad, at which her father shows him the full extent of his affection.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE RETURN OF THE FATHER

When Thetis emerges from the sea toward the end of *Iliad* I to ask that Zeus grant honor to Achilleus (I.495–510), he does not answer her at once, but sits for a long time in silence (I.511–2).[1] What concerns him is not the specific content of the favor itself, he admits, but Hera's likely reaction to it: she quarrels with him constantly as it is, alleging that he lends too much aid to the Trojans, and he is accordingly reluctant to give her further grounds for attack (I.517–23). Although he ultimately grants his suppliant's request (I.523–7), therefore, he urges her to leave Olympos as quickly as possible (I.522–3). Unfortunately, Hera has already seen the two of them together (I.536–8), and the moment her husband is back in the house she is at him with sharp words (κερτομίοισι), demanding to know what he did while he was out and accusing him of coming to decisions behind her back (I.539–43). Zeus' initial response to this is to tell his wife not to expect to be informed in advance of everything he is planning; what she needs to know, she will be told, but the rest of his thoughts are none of her concern (I.545–50). When she continues to insist and in fact guesses exactly what he has just promised Thetis (I.552–9), he explodes in anger. She is far too clever for him (I.561), he concedes, but her interference in his affairs will only make him love her less, for things are the way he wants them. She had therefore best take her seat and be quiet, or not even all the other gods together will be any protection 'when I lay my unconquerable hands upon you' (I.565–7). Terrified, Hera sits down in silence (I.568–9). At the end of the scene, however, she and Zeus go off to bed together (I.609–11) and, as the story Hephaistos goes on to tell about an even more violent quarrel between them in the past (I.589–91) makes clear, confrontations of this sort are in fact quite typical of their marriage.[2] When Zeus awakes at the beginning of Book XV,

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[1] For the mythological and social background to Thetis' request, see Walcot (1987) 16–8; Slatkin (1991), esp. 52–77, expanding an argument first put forward in Slatkin (1986).

[2] Cf. Zeus' insistence on the regularity of Hera's verbal assaults on him at I.520–1. For Zeus' battering of his wife, see Synodinou (1987), and note also XIV.310–1;

having been seduced and put to sleep by Hera's treachery (cf. XIV.157–352), therefore, he not only scowls at her (XV.13) but threatens to whip her for her insubordination (XV.16–7), reminding her of how he hung her up with chains around her hands and anvils on her feet on a previous occasion when she caused him similar trouble (XV.18–21).[3] For the moment, she behaves submissively (XV.34–46), but once back in the house and safely out of his reach, she tries to stir up the rest of the family against him, denouncing his highhandness and the slavish position to which he has allegedly reduced the other gods (XV.94–109). She has taken part in other revolts against his authority in the past (I.396–406) and now momentarily convinces Ares to oppose him actively (XV.110–20). This uprising as well comes rapidly to nothing (XV.121–42), however, and at the end of the poem Zeus is still in power and doing his best to cope with the demands of his insistent and angry wife (XXIV.23–76).

The marriage of Zeus and Hera in the *Iliad* is thus both stable and tempestuous. The basic structure of the family is patriarchal (e.g. I.503, 534, 544, 578), and Zeus accordingly makes all the final decisions about the course of the Trojan War and the fate of the individual human beings involved in it (cf. I.5).[4] All the same, he is forced to engage in a constant bitter struggle for power with his wife, who exercises as much control over him as she can and whose dissent seems to have a quasi-institutional status in their marriage (VIII.407–8; cf. VIII.421–2).[5] She is the craftier of the two and in one sense beyond his control, at least so long as he confines himself to words (esp. V.892–3). She is also capable of using his physical desire for her to her own advantage (esp. XIV.313–52), and when he is out of the house, attempts to rally the rest of the family against him (e.g. XV.94–120). Were they all to rebel simultaneously, it is conceivable he might be overthrown and replaced (I.396–406). He is nonetheless by far the strongest of them (esp. I.581, 589; VIII.17–27), and Hera's awareness that he can and will beat her if she grows

XV.90–1. Simon (1988) 14–21, discusses intra-familial violence in Homer but without reference to the relationship of Zeus and Hera.

[3] Zeus' scowl marks Hera's behavior specifically as transgressing proper lines of social authority; see Holoka (1983). For possible interconnections among all these stories, see Lang (1983), esp. 147–55.

[4] On the connection between patriarchal social structures and domestic violence in contemporary society, see Taubman (1986).

[5] For Hera's wrath, see O'Brien (1991); for the larger significance of her position, see Murnaghan (1992), esp. 242–54.

too aggressive acts as an important check on her behavior.[6] Nor is Zeus' violence confined to his wife. Indeed, when the quarrel erupts between them in Book I, Hephaistos immediately urges his mother to give way (I.577–9, 582–3), since she is putting the entire family at risk. 'If the Olympian should wish to knock us from our seats,' he notes, '[he could,] for he is by far the strongest' (I.580–1), and he adds that when he himself foolishly intervened on his mother's side in another dispute, Zeus in fact seized him by the foot and threw him down from Heaven, nearly killing him (I.590–3).[7] So too Hera's plan to put her husband to sleep in Book XIV meets with some initial resistance from Hypnos, who has learned through bitter experience to do nothing contrary to the Father's will (esp. XIV.248). He did her a similar favor on a previous occasion, he points out, and Zeus awoke 'and took it badly, and began tossing the gods around about the house, and he was looking for me in particular' (XIV.249–58). Having narrowly escaped being thrown from Heaven on that occasion (XIV.258–9), therefore, he is (not unreasonably) reluctant to run the same risk again.[8] So too Agamemnon alleges that when Hera used Ate to deceive Zeus in connection with Herakles and Eurystheus, he grew 'angry in his mind,' seized his daughter by the hair and threw her down to earth (XIX.126–31), just as in Book VIII he threatens that any god or goddess who interferes in the fighting around Troy will be beaten or thrown into Tartaros (VIII.7–16). Indeed, Iris informs Athena a little later that if she continues to follow Hera's lead and fights against her father, it will take ten years for her wounds to heal (VIII.404–6; cf. VIII.418–20), and Athena in turn stops Ares from confronting Zeus in Book XV specifically 'out of fear for all the gods' (XV.123). If he is angered further, she points out, he will come back to Olympos 'and take hold of both the guilty

[6] Cf. the remarks of the batterer quoted by Strauss (1978) 18: "She more or less tried to run me and I said no, and she got hysterical and said "I could kill you!" And I got rather angry and slapped her in the face three or four times and I said, don't you ever say that to me again! And we haven't had any problem since." As Strauss notes, "Many, if not most, such beatings are part of a family power struggle. It often takes only one or two slaps to fix the balance of power in a family for many years—or perhaps for a lifetime."

[7] For this story as a remembrance of a tradition of conflict between Zeus and Hephaistos, see Caldwell (1989) 172–85.

[8] Hera prevails over Sleep's better judgment only by offering him marriage to one of the Graces (XIV.267–76), thus reproducing the seduction of her husband on a smaller scale. Even then, however, Sleep is unwilling to get any closer to Zeus than absolutely necessary (XIV.286–91).

and the innocent one after another' (XV.135–7; cf. XV.121–2).[9] Even his brother Poseidon would have been confronted with violence, Zeus declares, had he not done what he was told when ordered to withdraw from the fighting around the city (XV.222–8). It is thus no accident that none of the other gods dare (οὐδέ τις ἔτλη) remain seated when Zeus appears in his halls at the beginning of the poem (I.533–5). They are all—quite rightly—terrified of him.[10]

Precisely what all this can be taken to imply about the historical Greek family is very difficult to say. Zeus is an alternately tender and violent father in the *Iliad* in part because that horrible ambivalence is characteristic of the larger world of love and war over which he presides, and his marriage to Hera is simultaneously atypical of real human unions, in that she has no independent set of kin-relationships to fall back on and no separate paternal house to which to flee. In addition, the poem preserves other, expressly human and much more positive visions of domestic relations and paternal power (esp. VI.399–404, 466–84), and the attitude of a father toward his child is in fact used at one point as an image of gentle, loving concern (πατὴρ ὣς ἤπιος αἰεί XXIV.770). There can nonetheless be little doubt that in one powerful and central Homeric vision of the family, the father's violence acts as a counterbalance to the cleverness of his wife and his desire for her, with the situation complicated further by her readiness and occasional ability to recruit other members of the household as allies against him (esp. XIV.314–28; cf. I.609–11).[11] That this pattern is not merely a social or literary aberration of some sort is apparent from Hesiod's *Theogony*.

One of the most striking features of the *Theogony* is that the genesis of the universe and everything within it is explained in terms which properly refer to human reproduction and social organization: the gods are born and marry, group themselves in families and generations, and struggle for power in that context. The cosmic order thus reflects the human order, albeit in exaggerated (and so exaggeratedly

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[9] When Iris and Apollo come to Mt. Ida, therefore, the poet takes special note of the fact that Zeus is not angry with them, since they had obeyed his summons (XV.155–6). Cf. V.31–5; Synodinou (1986), esp. 160–3.

[10] It is sometimes argued (e.g. by Kerenyi [1975], esp. 38–75) that the stormy relationship between Zeus and Hera reflects the historical collision between an old, pre-Greek matriarchial system and a relatively new, Greek patriarchy, but Zeus' willingness to beat his entire family rather than Hera alone suggests this is at best an inadequate analysis.

[11] Cf. Beye (1974) 91–3.

revealing) ways and, as Caldwell in particular has argued, this means the succession-myths can be read as on one level the psycho-history of individual human families projected onto the larger structure of the universe.[12] Like the *Iliad*, the *Theogony* often presents family life as a powerful system of mutual obligation and support (e.g. *Th.* 383–401, 437–8, 529–32, 579–80). All the same, this benign domestic model stands in sharp contrast to the way most of the descendents of Earth actually treat their parents and children in the poem. In one sense, the Hesiodic succession-myths mark a progression, from Sky, who took pleasure in abusing his wife and children (*Th.* 158–9), to the fixed and relatively benevolent rule of Zeus, and from the central generative role of Earth to the more or less marginal position of Hera and Zeus' other lovers.[13] Much more important for our purposes, however, is the recurring cycle of violence and treachery these stories taken together define. The Hesiodic divine father hates and fears his children (esp. *Th.* 154–6) and especially his sons, who are destined to overthrow him (esp. *Th.* 461–5), and therefore brutalizes them and their mother in a desperate attempt to retain his position of authority in the house (i.e. the universe). Thus Sky refuses to allow Earth's children even to emerge from her belly (*Th.* 156–8), while Kronos gobbles down his offspring the moment they are born (*Th.* 459–60).[14] The immediate result of the father's violence is tremendous pain for his wife (*Th.* 159–60, 467), and as a consequence his strategy ultimately proves counterproductive, for it leads to plots against and attacks upon him which spring from and are in fact justified by his own prior use of force (esp. *Th.* 164–6, 170–2, 472–3). This resistance begins with the divine mother, who counters her husband's brutality with cleverness, seeking out allies for herself or creating new enemies for him from within the family (*Th.* 160–75, 468–96), despite the fear he has managed to inspire there (*Th.* 167–8). In the case of Sky, this plotting goes on while he is out of the house and comes to fruition when he returns there in the evening (*Th.* 176; cf. 481), eager to have intercourse with Earth

[12] Caldwell (1989).

[13] Thus Brown (1953) 16–35, esp. 16–9; Arthur (1982); Caldwell (1989) 146–9, 161–2, 168–70.

[14] Cf. Hes. fr. 54 (a) + 57 M.-W., which tell part of the story of Asklepios and also seem to allude to Zeus as a batterer: 'Zeus, . . . angered at him [i.e. Apollo] . . . was about to throw [him] . . . to Tartaros. . . . All the immortals [were afraid?], and then Zeus would have [struck Apollo?], had not. . . .' Hes. fr. 54 (b) M.-W. gives a prose version of the same story.

(*Th.* 176–8). The moment he attempts to do so, he is ambushed and castrated by his son (*Th.* 178–81), who ultimately replaces him in power. Kronos, on the other hand, is simply expelled by violence to Tartaros (*Th.* 717–33) and his authority assumed by Zeus (*Th.* 490–1, 881–5), whose most stupendous accomplishment is to avoid a similar fate by absorbing Metis ('Craft') into himself (*Th.* 886–90).[15] The general family dynamic depicted here is thus a great deal like that which prevails on Olympos in the *Iliad*: the dominant male in the house attempts to maintain his position of authority by means of violence, and this violence is met by his wife's treachery allied with (and to some extent identical to) the beguiling and destructive power of sex and the active resistance of the rising new generation in the house which is produced by it.[16] The uneasy balance of power which results may endure for a considerable length of time (cf. *Th.* 635–8), but in the end either a miracle occurs, or the πατήρ is overthrown and replaced by one of his sons, and the cycle begins again. Echoes of something similar are apparent in the famous Catalogue of Wives (fr. 7 West) composed by the late 7th-century B.C.E. lyric poet Semonides.

The world Semonides describes is superficially male-dominated (e.g. fr. 7.69), but also full of constant bitter conflicts between men and women over power and authority. The Fox-wife, for example, has an extremely volatile temper (fr. 7.11) and is simultaneously 'aware of everything' (πάντων ἴδριν fr. 7.8–9; cf. I.561) and capable of turning black to white by means of her extraordinary verbal agility (fr. 7.10–11).[17] So too the Dog-wife wants to hear and know everything (fr. 7.13; cf. I.540–3), 'barks' constantly and has 'an impossible cry' (fr. 7.15, 20; cf. I.518–21), and cannot be broken of her prying habits even if a man threatens (ἀπειλήσας) her or angrily knocks her teeth out with a rock (fr. 7.16–8). The lazy and 'repeatedly beaten'

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[15] Cf. Caldwell (1989) 187: "The paternal role of Hesiod's Zeus is the wish-fulfilling result of his oedipal triumph. He wins the stuff of divine sons' dreams—virtually unlimited sexual access to goddesses and mortal woman—and ... no ambitious son appears to challenge his rule and take his place."

[16] Note the close connection between sex and deception at *Th.* 120–2, 203–6, 224.

[17] For the Fox-wife's bitter temper, compare the Sea-wife, who sometimes flies into a rage, in which case one does best to stay as far away from her as possible (fr. 7.32–6, 39–40). The stupid wife, on the other hand, who lacks the curiosity of the Dog-wife and the cleverness of the Fox-wife, also seems to have no capacity for aggressive anger against her husband (fr. 7.21–6); clearly these attributes somehow go together.

(παλιντριβέος) Ass-Wife (fr. 7.43; cf. I.565–7), on the other hand, can finally be driven to work 'by means of force and angry threats' (σύν τ' ἀνάγκῃ σύν τ' ἐνιπῇσιν fr. 7.44–6). As Lloyd-Jones notes, all of this is satire.[18] Satire is only effective when it is grounded in a social or intellectual reality familiar to its audience, however, and that background here is transparently the idea that in at least some cases men may resort to violence or threats of violence in order to control the behavior (and in particular the bitter and powerful words) of their wives. One final strand of evidence, from a slightly later period, must be woven in here as well.

That real Greek husbands and wives in Classical Athens quarrelled with one another would seem to be beyond dispute.[19] That men sometimes used violence to resolve such quarrels, however, is more difficult to prove.[20] The most substantial evidence comes from Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, where the Proboulos, who can barely restrain himself from hitting the women's leader 'out of wrath' (*Lys.* 503–5), and the heroine herself both admit that wives who are not silent when their spouses tell them to be can expect to be struck in the head (*Lys.* 515–6, 519–21; cf. I.565–9). So too Kalonike assumes that any of her fellow conspirators who refuse to sleep with their husbands will be dragged into the bedroom and, if they continue to resist, beaten until they submit (*Lys.* 160–2).[21] There is no implication

[18] Lloyd-Jones (1975) 32–3.

[19] Note in particular Socrates' remark that couples given false information about one another before the wedding end up locked in hatred (X. *Mem.* 2.6.36); the quarrel (feigned on one side only) between the speaker of Lys. 1.12 and his wife, which grew out of her repeated refusal to do as he said; Xanthippe's alleged constant abuse of her husband (X. *Smp.* 2.10); the bitter argument and name-calling which took place between the Theban Chlidon and his wife, and went on for the better part of a day and included her cursing him (Plu. *Pel.* 8.5); and the attitude of the speaker of [D.] 40.29, who seems to regard it as a matter of course that married couples will quarrel. For more literary examples, cf. the apparently extended argument between Strepsiades and his wife over their son's name (Ar. *Nu.* 61–7); the complaint of the speaker of Alex. fr. 150 K-A, who refers to the bitterness of a wife's anger; and the quarrel between the Homeric Oceanos and Tethys, as a result of which they no longer sleep together (XIV.205–7). For an interesting discussion of some of these issues, see Walcot (1987a).

[20] The question is ignored by (e.g.) Ehrenberg (1951); Lacey (1968); Slater (1968); Pomeroy (1975); Gould (1990). Golden (1985) 102 n. 38, acknowledges the likelihood that men beat their wives in classical Athens, but does not marshal any substantial evidence in support of the thesis. (φλῶσιν in Ar. fr. 9 K-A seems to have a purely metaphorical sense). For the connection between violence and eroticism in 5th century Athens, see Keuls (1985) 180–2, and plates 164, 166, 169 and 170. Winkler (1990) 71–126, esp. 93–8, discusses evidence from a somewhat later period.

[21] Cf. Aristogeiton's alleged treatment of his old lover and benefactress Zobia

in the text that a man would normally choose to act in this fashion, and Lysistrata says explicitly that sex obtained by violence is unlikely to be satisfying (*Lys.* 162–3). All the same, no-one in the play ever questions a man's fundamental right to hit his wife 'if he needs to,' and while this could theoretically be a purely literary conceit, there is no obvious reason why it should be.[22] The evidence for the use of physical violence against children in the same period, on the other hand, is diverse and quite abundant.[23] The old men who make up the chorus in *Wasps*, for example, strike their sons with their fists for disobeying an order (cf. *V.* 254), while Trygaios in *Peace* promises his little girls a 'knuckle sandwich' when they interfere with his plan to fly to Heaven (*Pax* 122–3; cf. *Lys.* 877–9). So too the Laws in Plato's *Crito* base their claim to a right to punish Socrates on a close analogy with a father's position vis-à-vis his children (esp. Pl. *Cri.* 50e–51c), and in the *Protagoras* the rhetor treats it as a given that parents and other guardians will 'straighten out' a disobedient boy 'with threats and blows' (ἀπειλαῖς καὶ πληγαῖς) (Pl. *Prt.* 325d; cf. *Ly.* 208d; X. *An.* 5.8.18). It is the opposite sort of violence, that directed by sons against their parents and especially their fathers, which attracts the most attention in the literature of this period, however, and the connections between that violence and what preceded and allegedly engendered it lead directly back to the story of the *Odyssey*.

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when she angered him: 'he sent her out of the house with blows and threats' (ῥαπίσας καὶ ἀπειλήσας ἀπέπεμψ' ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκίας) (D. 25.57). Not every Greek man dominated his household, of course, even if he was formally κύριος over it; see Walcot (1987), esp. 12–20. All the same, the possibility that an Athenian's wife might dare to strike him back is treated as so bizarre as to be laughable (Ar. *Av.* 440–3, with the Scholiast ad loc.; cf. *AP* 11.79).

[22] For Aristophanes' plays as a source of Athenian social history, see Ehrenberg (1951). Foxhall (1989) 22–44, shows that a dowry gave an Athenian woman real power within her marriage, since if she left, the money assigned to her left as well. So long as a woman believed that any beatings she received represented an exercise of her husband's legitimate rights over her (i.e. "I deserved it"), however, she would have been unlikely to see herself as victimized and thus deserving a divorce. Nor would every woman's natal house necessarily have been eager to receive her back, either because her complaints were not perceived as legitimate or serious, or because her marriage was too beneficial to her parents or brothers to be allowed to fail.

[23] Golden (1985) 101–4, discusses the physical discipline of Greek children at home and in school, but is more concerned with the significance of the term παῖς. See also Golden (1990) 101–3, who cites most of the passages discussed here. I should make my own presuppositions clear: virtually all violence against children is by definition abusive, including the violence traditionally classified in our own society as 'parental discipline.'

The tendency of the Hesiodic gods in particular to resort to violence in their intergenerational struggles for power is due in large part to their agelessness and immortality. Divine fathers never grow old and therefore feel no natural compulsion to surrender authority to the next generation. Instead, they must be overthrown directly and with force, and Kronos accordingly ambushes and castrates Sky, while Zeus wages war on Kronos in turn and hurls him down to Tartaros. Mortal fathers, on the other hand, inevitably grow feeble and die, and can thus be replaced in less aggressive, although often no less psychologically charged ways. The establishment of human social codes to make this intergenerational transfer of power possible is therefore an important step in repressing the 'natural' domestic violence which the *Iliad* and the *Theogony* define as characteristic of 'earlier occasions' or 'earlier ages.'[24]

That human sons are obliged to support their aged parents and particularly their fathers is an idea already taken for granted by Homer in the idea of θρέπτρα, 'return for one's upbringing' (IV.477–8 = XVII.301–2; cf. IX.494–5; XXIV.540–1). Hesiod as well assumes that a child is obliged to show respect to his aged parents and give them back θρεπτήρια (cf. *Op.* 185–8), and notes that part of the price of avoiding marriage is that one may be left without a caretaker in old age (χήτει γηροκόμοιο) (*Th.* 603–5). Not every son accepts his 'natural obligations' to his parents with great enthusiasm, of course, and Hesiod accordingly says at one point that in the last days (perhaps to be understood in personal terms as 'in a man's old age') fathers and children will no longer be in accord and men will dishonor, quarrel with and refuse to support their parents (*Op.* 180–8), while at another he simply characterizes speaking harshly to one's aged father as the mark of a bad man (*Op.* 331–2; cf. *Th.* 610–2). This old informal social obligation was made a legal requirement in an Athenian law attributed to Solon which obliged adult male citizens to provide their parents with food, housing and ultimately burial, or be liable to a charge of κάκωσις τῶν γονέων ('abuse of one's begetters') (Aeschin. 1.128; D. 24.103–7; Arist. *Ath.* 56.6; X. *Mem.* 2.2.13; cf. Lys. 13.91).[25] Theophrastos' socially depraved man (ἀπονενοημένος)

[24] On the gradual displacement of direct violence from the Hesiodic succession myths, see Arthur (1982) 72–3; Caldwell (1987) 15–35.

[25] For the horror of growing old without a male child to take care of one, see Lys. 2.73; D. 60.36; cf. Ar. *V.* 731–2. A son was also expected to tend his parents' graves (X. *Mem.* 2.2.13), although an exception was made to all these requirements

is thus defined in part by his refusal to support his mother (Thphr. *Char.* vi.6), and the son at Com. fr. adespota 371 K is likewise behaving in an absolutely unacceptable way when he tells one of his parents,

> πολλῶν ὀφείλω σοι χάριτας, γονῆς, τροφῆς.
> ἀμείβομαί σε τῷ φυγεῖν τὴν οἰκίαν.
> I owe you gratitude for many things, my begetting, my upbringing.
> I'm paying you back with exile from the house.[26]

Such neglect is referred to on occasion as 'father-beating' (esp. D. 24.102–3; Lys. 13.91), and this potentially strained metaphor helps make sense of the deeper significance of the issue.

To accuse an Athenian of beating or, even worse, killing his parents was an outrageous slander (esp. Lys. 10.1–3, 6, 21), the sort of thing one would normally say only in the heat of anger (Lys. 10.30; cf. Ar. *Nu.* 909–11), and father-beaters are therefore routinely included in 5th and 4th century catalogues of the very lowest of villains, along with deserters from the ranks, male prostitutes, murderers and thieves (Philonid. fr. 5 K-A; Aeschin. 1.28–30; D. 24.102–3, 119). In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, for example, Herakles lists among those condemned to eternal punishment in the Underworld 'whoever beat his mother or struck his father's jaw' (*Ra.* 149–50) and πατραλοῖαι are prominent in the mob of petty criminals and low-lifes who side with Euripides against Aeschylus (*Ra.* 771–6). So too in *Wasps* the poet vilifies the enemies attacked in his previous year's play as men 'who used to strangle their fathers . . . and throttle their grandfathers' (*V.* 1039), while the most striking absurdity to which Dionysodoros reduces Ktesippos in Plato's *Euthydemos* is that because he beats his dog and because his dog is a father, he beats his father (Pl. *Euthd.* 298d–e).[27] The two most important texts for making sense of vio-

in special cases, such as when the father had not taught his son a trade or had forced him into prostitution (Aeschin. 1.13; Plu. *Sol.* 22). Neglect of one's parents was considered sufficiently serious that the prosecutor of such a case was not penalized if he received less than twenty percent of the votes (Arist. *Ath.* 56.6), while a man convicted of abusing his mother or father was stripped of his right to speak in the Assembly (Aeschin. 1.28). Sanctions of this sort were nonetheless most likely imposed in a selective way, and these laws should therefore be seen as reflecting social ideals rather than the precise character of day-to-day life in the city; see Winkler (1990) 45–70, esp. 54–64.

[26] Cf. Lys. 31.21–2; D. 25.54, 58; E. *Alc.* 662–8; *Med.* 1032–6.

[27] Note also Ar. *Ec.* 638–40, where father-beating is mockingly said to be endemic in the city, as well as two (apparently humorous) anecdotes preserved in

lence of this sort and connecting it with the larger domestic cycle defined by Homer, Hesiod, Semonides and others, however, are Aristophanes, *Birds* 1337–71 and *Clouds* 1321–1475.

The first colonist to arrive in Cloudcuckooland in *Birds* is a young man (νεανίσκος *Av.* 1362) just old enough to begin military service (*Av.* 1364–9). He is eager to strangle his father, he admits (*Av.* 1351–2), and has come to Birdland specifically because one basic characteristic of Peisetairos' new city is that outrageous behaviors like this are accepted and even applauded there (*Av.* 1347–50). Indeed, the Chorus put first on their list of shameful things (αἰσχρά) outlawed in Athens but considered utterly respectable (καλά) among them the freedom to run up to one's father and hit him (*Av.* 755–9).[28] The Young Man's motives are thus quite straightforward and very much in line with those of Kronos and Zeus in the *Theogony*: he wants to gain control of the family estate (καὶ πάντ' ἔχειν *Av.* 1352).[29] Peisetairos promptly informs him that even among the Birds it is expected that, after a father brings his children up, they will take care of him in turn (*Av.* 1353–7),[30] however, and advises him to change his mind and direct his hostility against the state's enemies instead (*Av.* 1362–9). In the end he does so and sets off to fight the Thracians (*Av.* 1370–1).

This scene thus suggests first that a desire to beat or otherwise abuse one's father is on one level entirely normal, for even Peisetairos felt this way when he was young (*Av.* 1362–3), but also that a man should nonetheless be able to resist that urge in one way or another.

Aristotle. The first is the story of a man who defended himself against a charge of father-beating by pointing out that his father and grandfather had both beaten their fathers and by insisting he expected he would himself eventually be beaten in turn, συγγενὲς γὰρ ἡμῖν ('for it runs in our family'). The second involves an individual who used to tell his son to stop dragging him out of the house when he reached the door, since he had never dragged his own father any further than that (Arist. *EN* 1149b8–14).

[28] Cf. *Nu.* 1427–9, where Pheidippides as well asserts his natural right to beat his father on the basis of an analogy with the behavior of chickens.

[29] Cf. Lys. 10.5, where the speaker claims a charge of murdering his father would be considerably more believable if he could be thought to have acted for the sake of money. Tensions between real Athenian sons and fathers probably did sometimes involve disputes over the family estate; cf. Golden (1990) 104–14.

[30] This was allegedly the rule among storks (Phot. *s.v.* πελαργικοὶ νόμοι· ἀνεκτρέφειν τοὺς γονεῖς; cf. S. *El.* 1058–62; Suid. α 2707), and it thus seems likely that paternal-filial relationships were central to Aristophanes' Πελαργοί. Cf. fr. 445 K-A:

> οὐ γὰρ σὺ παρέχεις ἀμφιέσασθαι τῷ πατρί
> for you don't give your father anything to wear.

The suggestion that the Young Man's violence be turned against the city's enemies rather than his father's (contrast S. *Ant.* 641–4), moreover, helps explain the apparent fascination with the issue in democratic Athens in another way by asserting an underlying equivalence between father (πατήρ) and fatherland (πατρίς): to beat the parent who engendered and raised one is the moral equivalent of refusing to serve and honor the state (cf. Lys. 13.91). The Laws in the *Crito* make this point as well (esp. Pl. *Cri.* 51c), and Athens as a good parent which nourishes, educates and cares for its citizens, and then imposes obligations on them in turn, is a commonplace in contemporary funeral orations.[31] As Strauss has argued, therefore, the concerns voiced here and elsewhere in this period about the state of father-son relations in the city should perhaps be read in part as expressions of anxiety about the responsibilities which bound the citizen to his state and about the tensions which inevitably existed between the two.[32] The background to the discussion and its fundamental source of imagery, however, remains the pattern of domestic discipline and revenge defined by Homer and Hesiod several centuries earlier. The larger importance of this becomes clear in the confrontation between Strepsiades and Pheidippides in *Clouds.*

As Whitman argued long ago, *Clouds* is very much about the struggle between generations and many of its larger themes play off of that concern.[33] The Just Argument offers Pheidippides a program of rigorous discipline, full of hardship, self-denial and, of course, respect for one's father (*Nu.* 961–83). A boy must learn the musical style of those who went before him, he says, for no innovation or deviation from what has been passed down by the πατέρες will be tolerated (*Nu.* 966–72).[34] He must also yield his seat when older men appear at the common mess (*Nu.* 993) and wait to eat until they have finished (*Nu.* 981–2). Above all else, he must show respect to his father in recognition of the debt owed for his upbringing, and neither speak back to him nor mock his old age (*Nu.* 994, 998–9). The Unjust Argument's

[31] Esp. D. 60.4–5; Lys. 2.17; cf. Hyp. 6.26–7. Note also the complaint of the old Marathon-fighters in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, who insist that although they did good for Athens when they were young, they are now abused by the young and neglected in their old age (*Ach.* 676–718, esp. 677–8).

[32] Strauss (1989), esp. 107–18, greatly expanded in Strauss (1993).

[33] Whitman (1964) 124–7; cf. the more wide-ranging remarks of Hubbard (1989).

[34] Cf. the regular stress in funeral orations on the achievements of and need to imitate the forefathers (Th. 2.36.1–2; D. 60.7–11; Lys. 2.3–16, 20–66).

denial of the existence of Δίκη, on the other hand, depends precisely on the right of sons to use violence against their fathers, since Zeus allegedly bound Kronos (*Nu.* 902–6). Pheidippides' great contribution to the drama is to put this theory into practice.

At *Clouds* 1321 Strepsiades bursts onstage, screaming for help and denouncing his newly educated son for beating him inside the house (esp. *Nu.* 1321–7).[35] He has previously indicated that he fears Pheidippides' size and vigor and therefore feels some reluctance to impose upon him (*Nu.* 797–9). All the same, he clearly regards the boy's actual use of force against him as a virtual definition of injustice (*Nu.* 1338–41) and apparently expects others to agree with him, since he calls on his neighbors and relatives to come to his aid (*Nu.* 1322–3).[36] He brought his son up, Strepsiades says, foreseeing and responding to his every need (*Nu.* 1380–5), but now that he himself is old, the boy strangles him and refuses to render back similar services (*Nu.* 1385–90). The Socratically-inspired collapse of Pheidippides' respect for Zeus (cf. *Nu.* 247–8, 365–426) and his loss of reverence for his father are thus functionally one and the same thing, and Strepsiades accordingly makes a final vain attempt to restore both with an appeal to the boy in the name of 'paternal Zeus' (*Nu.* 1468–71). As soon becomes apparent, however, Pheidippides' behavior has domestic roots much deeper than his recent miseducation in the ThinkTank. He was a cause of quarreling between his parents from the very first (*Nu.* 60–2), after all, and seems to have joined the camp of his sexually exciting (*Nu.* 49–51) mother relatively early on (*Nu.* 68–74; cf. I.590).[37] In the argument which now takes place onstage, moreover, Strepsiades acknowledges that he regularly beat the boy when he was young, although he claims to have done so out of loving concern for him (εὐνοῶν τε καὶ κηδόμενος *Nu.* 1409–10), in a belief that hitting him was just (*Nu.* 1434–5; cf. *Nu.* 1416). Pheidippides responds to this admission by insisting that he is now and always has been a free citizen (*Nu.* 1414), and on that basis claims the right to use violence against his father in return (*Nu.* 1411–4; cf. ἀντιτύπτειν *Nu.* 1424). His beating of Strepsiades thus springs ultimately from

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[35] On this scene, see also Reckford (1976), whose analysis does not intersect in any substantial way with my own.

[36] Cf. Pl. *Euthyphro*, where the willingness of Socrates' interlocutor to prosecute his own father is made a symbol of his inability to understand what is holy and good (esp. 5a–6d; 15d).

[37] Cf. Walcot (1987) 19–20.

the same source as Kronos' and Zeus' attacks on their sires: the father's 'disciplinary' violence, when seen from the perspective of the child, becomes an excuse for retaliation against him (esp. Hes. *Th.* 170–2) and thus for driving him out of authority over the house. Indeed, what has just happened offstage is specifically connected within the text to the issue of paternal power. Pheidippides suggested earlier that his father was fast approaching the age where he should surrender control over the household to his son, and even hinted that the old man ought perhaps to be forced to do so (*Nu.* 844–6). The current quarrel began, moreover, when the boy tried to sing a song which seemed to sanction brother-sister incest of the sort which distinguishes relations among the divine couples in the *Theogony* and forms a consistent sequel to the overthrow of the father there (Hes. *Th.* 453, cf. 133–7; 921, cf. 453–7).[38] When Strepsiades cursed the boy for this none-too-subtle attack on his own authority, blows between them quickly followed (*Nu.* 1371–6).

When read together, therefore, these texts define a cycle of domestic life in which the father's desperate and for a time successful attempt to maintain his dominance over his wife and children leads them to form an alliance against him while he is out of the house, as adult men in this world often are.[39] His weapon is violence or at least the threat of violence, justified in some cases as 'discipline'; theirs is a combination of sex and guile and the possibility of turning an equivalent force back upon him when he grows old or his children reach maturity (cf. Hes. *Th.* 492–3). When the family is thrown back together at the end of the day, either the father is overthrown and replaced by one of his sons, or he survives to be challenged again sometime in the future. Under 'normal' circumstances, such as the current reign of Hesiod's Zeus, overt physical force is not used in the house and the position of the πατήρ is relatively stable.[40] All the same, an awareness of the potential for an explosion when he comes

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[38] Cf. XIV.295–6, where Zeus says his initial love-making with Hera took place in secret from their parents.

[39] Cf. Hes. *Th.* 594–602, where the drone (i.e. female) bees remain lazily inside all day, while the more industrious (i.e. male) bees work somewhere outside the hive. For the absence of the father and the violence 'inevitably' associated with it, cf. Pucci (1992).

[40] Even Zeus, after all, never strikes anyone in the course of the *Iliad*, but gets his way instead by means of threats and reminders of the beatings he has dealt out in the past. For the story of Achilles as another version of this cycle, see Slatkin (1986) 22; (1991) 101–2, 113.

back to confront the plans and claims of his wife and children lurks everywhere within our sources. That this pattern somehow reflects the psychological structure of the real Greek family in the 8th to 4th centuries B.C.E. seems to me quite likely. Not every πατήρ need necessarily have struck or even have threatened to strike the other members of his family, just as not every wife necessarily opposed her husband's authority in an overtly bitter and aggressive fashion. All the same, the presence of these themes throughout the literature of the period suggests that the potential for such behavior was widely recognized. As I will argue in more detail in a slightly different context in the following chapter, however, what matters more than elusive historical questions of this sort is the fact that the wide-spread image of the absent but potentially vengeful father and his threatening and powerful wife has profoundly shaped Homer's story of Odysseus.[41] When the poem begins, after all, the hero has been gone from home for an extended period of time. His old father has been stripped of power and authority and reduced to decrepit exile from the house; his son has matured during his absence and begun to assert himself; his halls are occupied by a crowd of violent young men, who are ready and eager to take his place; his wife is clever and attractive, but also said to be untrustworthy; in the end, he regains control of his house with an outburst of violence so extreme that the floor literally runs with blood (xxii.309).[42] Despite all this, the tale ends in an apparently happy manner, in large part because it is structured in a manner typical of κλέος.

The peculiar tendencies of Homer's story in this regard are most immediately apparent in its treatment of Odysseus' male relatives. Laertes, like e.g. Zeus' father Kronos, first of all, has long ago been deprived of his authority, banished from the house and reduced to rags and manual labor (esp. xxiv.226–31; cf. xi.187–94).[43] Although Antikleia's remarks in Book xi suggest the old man was in exile in the country even before his son left for Troy (n.b. αὐτόθι μίμνει/ ἀγρῷ xi.187–8), however, Odysseus is never said to have driven him out in

[41] For the image of the family applied to Odysseus' return, cf. Moulton (1977) 141–5.

[42] For a similar approach to the story, see Nagler (1990) 345–54.

[43] Note the direct contrast drawn between Laertes' personal kingliness and his present condition (xxiv.249–57; cf. xi.190–1), and compare the wretched situation of Oedipus at S. *OC* 1356–7. On old age in the *Odyssey* and Laertes' situation in particular, see Falkner (1989), esp. 38–53.

order to be rid of him (contrast Hes. *Th.* 717–33). Instead, it is precisely Laertes' longing for his vanished child which is responsible for his decline (xi.195–6), and the story as a whole is at pains to show how much the two men love each other (esp. xxiv.345–8) and how they act in solidarity to protect their house and its honor (esp. xxiv.496–527). The traditional conflict between father and son has thus been carefully suppressed, to the extent that Odysseus' inheritance of the estate is transformed into a means of recognition between him and Laertes and thus becomes not a cause for quarrelling but a mark of solidarity between generations (xxiv.328–9, 336–46).[44] Despite the fact that he is ultimately given back his honor and partially rejuvenated (esp. xxiv.520–4), however, the old man is not allowed to resume control over the household, but has clearly been replaced forever (esp. xxiv.483). As for Telemachos, there are obvious if quiet signs of tension between him and Odysseus throughout the final third of the poem (esp. xix.35–50; xxiii.96–116; cf. xvi.95–111). Indeed, the last words they speak are a pointed exchange about whether or not the boy can live up to the standard of manhood set by his forebearers (xxiv.506–15), and when Telemachos undertakes to string the bow and shoot an arrow through the axes (xxi.113–7), this conflict rises almost to the surface of the text. Although he obviously has no real intention of marrying his mother and driving his father from the house, after all, the prize for success in the contest remains her hand (xix.576–81; xxi.73–9), and the larger implications of his desire to participate are thus unmistakeable: he is on some level a serious rival for domestic power. At the decisive moment, he yields to Odysseus' authority and thus to the paternal as opposed to the filial version of their story (xxi.125–39).[45] The Suitors, on the other hand, show no such discretion and simultaneously behave in an apparently peculiar fashion from first to last. They bring no gifts (cf. xviii.274–80) and refuse to confront Ikarios face-to-face to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage (ii.52–4), but have occupied Odysseus' house for many years, eating his food and drinking his wine (e.g.

[44] See also Falkner (1989) 43–4. For Odysseus' blinding of and escape from the Kyklops in Book ix as a parallel story of an attack upon the father's sexuality and escape from the nursery, see Austin (1983).

[45] Cf. Simon (1974) 560–1, and note the image Menelaos conjures up of the return of Odysseus: a lion comes back to his bed to discover that a doe has put her children there, and quickly destroys them all (iv.333–40; xvii.124–31). Menelaos is thinking of the Suitors, but the simile fits Telemachos almost as well.

ii.55–8), sleeping with his serving-women (e.g. xx.6–7) and doing their best to win Penelope over. They are accordingly not particularly believable noble contenders for the queen's hand, but they are perfectly 'typical sons' in the traditional nightmare vision of the Greek family: violent young men who reside in the father's house and live off his goods but are ready to form an alliance with his wife during one of his periodic absences in order to overthrow him and seize control of the estate.[46] Indeed, Odysseus once dandled some of them upon his knees (xvi.442–4), and together with Telemachos they define a single very real threat to the hero's return: the possibility that he will be replaced by a younger generation of men, who will expel him from power or even bring about his death. The tale as a whole, however, has been radically bifurcated and thus transformed (in a fashion typical of κλέος) into a polar contrast between the allegedly very bad, who represent all one should not be, and the very good, whose supposed example is to be emulated.[47] When with a scowl upon his face (xxii.34, 60, 320; cf. XV.13) Odysseus finally announces his return (xxii.35–41) and rages through the house (esp. xxii.302–9; cf. XIV.256–7; XV.136–7) butchering his enemies, therefore, he both suppresses the generational challenge the young men he confronts on Ithaca represent and is assisted in this by his 'real son,' who fights not against him now but at his side (e.g. xxii.91–113).[48] Like Hesiod's Zeus, it seems, Homer's hero has escaped the normally irresistible pressure of time, and although Tiresias predicts at one point that death is coming for him eventually (xi.134–7; cf. xxiii.281–4), at the end of the poem Zeus announces he will rule for all time as unchallenged king of Ithaca (xxiv.483) and thus as both domestic and communal father (cf. ii.46–7, 233–4).[49] Although vengeance has been taken for the crimes committed during his absence (esp. xxii.35–41), therefore, his family's story as a whole comes to an entirely happy conclusion. Similarly complex dynamics are at work in Odysseus' reunion with Penelope.

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[46] That these 'sons' desire above all else to sleep with Penelope, of course, is both the strongest possible evidence of their depravity and a clear sign of the story's deep psychological roots.

[47] Cf. XXIV.255–62, where Priam contrasts his 'good sons' (i.e. those who are no more) with his 'bad sons' (i.e. those who survive), calling the latter 'thieves of lambs and kids.'

[48] Cf. Simon (1988) 17: "one has to say that the theme of murderous father-son rivalry is represented by *displacement* to the suitors."

[49] Cf. the equally extended rule of the old patriarch Nestor in Pylos (iii.245–6).

Almost from the very first, Homer presents his hero as a man involved in specifically sexual ways with women. Kalypso keeps him not as a pet or a handyman, after all, but as a captive lover (esp. v.226–7; cf. v.118–29), and would like to have him permanently for her husband (i.14–5; cf. v.135–6, 208–9). He no longer sleeps with her willingly (v.153–5), however, and despite her constant attempts at persuasion (i.56–7; cf. v.203–13), flees her bed and her island, which are functionally one and the same thing, at the first opportunity (esp. v.215–24). She is in complete control of their relationship, he cannot escape or challenge her, and the entire arrangement is, for him at least, unsatisfactory.[50] In part, Odysseus merely wants to get back to his native island (esp. i.56–9), but there also seems to be something about his relationship with Penelope which he longs for (esp. v.210; cf. i.13; v.215–20) and which is by implication lacking on Ogygia. What that might be is hinted at in the gradual increase in sexual temperature in the hero's encounters with Nausikaa and Kirke, which foreshadow and inform the eventual course of events in his own house on Ithaca.

Homer gives an initial erotic flavor to Athena's visit to Nausikaa in Book vi by allowing his audience access to the princess' bedroom despite the guardian presence of her attendants there (vi.15–9), and by giving them her name from the very first (vi.17; contrast vi.196–7).[51] Athena herself, meanwhile, uses the idea of marriage to convince the girl to go down to the shore that day, telling her her time is near (vi.27) and adding that she will not be a virgin for much longer (vi.33). Nausikaa's readiness to engage in specifically sexual activity is thus part of the implicit emotional and social background of everything which follows (esp. vi.66–7; cf. vii.311–5), and it eventually emerges that she is already being courted by the local young men, albeit unsuccessfully so far (vi.283–4).[52] When she and her

[50] On the 'inappropriate' nature of Kalypso's dominance over Odysseus, cf. Wohl (1993) 26. On Ogygia as a sort of living death from which Odysseus must escape, see Anderson (1958) 7–10; Frame (1978) 73–4; Crane (1988) 15–29. To leave there for Ithaca, however, is also to choose death (esp. v.203–20; cf. xiii.79–80); note in particular the island's alleged location to the west of its neighbors and 'toward the gloom' (ix.25–6), which is bad geography but good symbolism.

[51] On Nausikaa's name and the way it is handled here, see Olson (1992a) 2–4.

[52] Note also the intimations of courtship and eligibility in what Nausikaa claims is her unmarried brothers' concern to be seen at the dance in newly-washed clothing (vi.62–5; cf. v.27–30). For the marriage-motif at work on Scheria, see van Leeuwen (1911) 24–30; Paton (1912); Woodhouse (1930) 54–65; Lattimore (1969); Gross (1976) 311–7; Van Nortwick (1979), esp. 270–2; Forsyth (1979), esp. 112; Crane (1988)

companions begin to play ball after their washing is done, moreover, the poet has them throw off their scarves (vi.100), which is for them only a matter of artless convenience, since they believe they are alone and unobserved, but for the external audience increases the voyeuristic character of the action enormously.[53] Homer also chooses this moment to compare Nausikaa to the archetypal virgin Artemis as she comes dancing down a mountain, conspicuous among the marriageable girls (νύμφαι) who accompany her (vi.101–9), just as young women ready to be married (or simply carried off and raped) routinely do in other roughly contemporary literature.[54] The action here is thus quite highly charged from the very first, and when Odysseus emerges from the olive bushes he has made into a bed (v.482–3; cf. xxiii.189–201), he is entirely naked (cf. v.372). Rather than treating this as a tacit narrative assumption, moreover, Homer lays repeated emphasis on the fact (esp. vi.129, 136), and the branch the hero breaks off to conceal his private parts from Nausikaa (vi.127–9) accordingly has precisely the opposite effect on the poem's external audience, by drawing attention to what is, on a more superficial level in the text, being covered up.[55] In between his first and second mentions of Odysseus' lack of clothing, finally, Homer inserts an extraordinary image, comparing his hero to a 'mountain-bred lion, trusting in his strength,' which is driven by hunger to break into a herdsman's fold and attack the animals penned up inside there (vi.130–4).[56]

A complete ecological history of Dark Age Greece has not yet been written and, given the limited nature of our sources, may never be.[57] All the same, within the text of the *Odyssey* at least, this is a period in which human activity and settlement are pushing up out of the valleys into the hills and establishing increasingly substantial

136–43, esp. 137–8; Most (1989) 26–7; Pedrick (1988) 92–3; Austin (1991); Olson (1992a); Reece (1993) 101–21; Beye (1993) 181–3.

[53] On the sexual suggestiveness of the gesture, cf. Nagler (1974) 44–60, esp. 47; Wohl (1992) 27–9, draws attention to the implications of the lion-simile in vi.130–6 (see below) as well. For κρήδεμνον as 'head-scarf' rather than 'veil,' see Janko (1992) ad XIV.184.

[54] Cf. XVI.181–3, with Janko (1992) ad XVI.179–92; *h.Cer.* 2–5, with Richardson (1974) ad 5; *h.Ven.* 117–27; Hes. fr. 140 M.-W.

[55] Cf. Beye (1993) 182.

[56] Wild deer are also listed among the lion's potential prey (vi.133), but the simile as a whole is overwhelmingly concerned with an attack on domestic animals.

[57] See, however, Sallares (1991), esp. 84–91, whose focus is more on the Classical period than the late Dark Ages (his "r" period).

outposts there.[58] 'The mountain' is thus a shadowy and contested frontier, a place where one cuts timber (x.103–4) or hunts (ix.120–1; xix.428–32; cf. xi.572–5) or drives one's flocks (ix.315–6), but where human civilization is not yet dominant and men still come face-to-face with more elemental forces of nature.[59] The mountain is also the only home assigned Odysseus' maternal grandfather Autolykos (xix.410–1), 'the wolf himself,' who gives the hero his name (xix.407–9), as well as the place in which he gets his scar and so again in another sense his identity (xix.392–4; xxi.217–24; xxiv.331–4).[60] From one end of the poem to the other, moreover, Odysseus' return to Ithaca and the revenge he extracts there are presented as an irruption of this wild and predatory realm into the relatively more civilized low-lands (e.g. ii.146–7, 157–66; xv.160–81, esp. 174–7; xix.536–50, esp. 538–9; xxii.302–9), and the encounter on the Scherian beach ties that idea explicitly together with the larger question of sexuality.[61] Nausikaa is a beautiful and highly marriageable virgin girl, caught off guard away from the city and her family with her head uncovered; Odysseus is an emphatically naked beast, who rushes down upon her 'to make his try'; the two come together where land meets sea, sweet water meets salt, and the savage world of the mountain and the forest (cf. v.470–3) comes up against the furthest reaches of the city.[62] Rather than running away down the beach as her handmaids (quite appropriately) do (vi.138), however, the princess stands her ground (vi.139) and waits to meet this man who, she rapidly decides, would make a very desirable husband (esp. vi.237–45, 275–81).[63] Her decision is in one sense odd and thus quite arbitrarily

[58] Note esp. Eumaios' farm, which he has built with his own hands by cutting trees and quarrying stone (xiv.5–14; cf. xiv.65–6; xv.366–70) up in the heights (xiv.2–3) far from the city (xvii.25), and Laertes' country estate, which he has reclaimed with his own labor (xxiv.206–7) and continues to improve (xxiv.222–7); cf. the details of Eurymachos' mocking offer of employment at xviii.357–9.

[59] Buxton (1992), esp. 2–4, 6–9, offers an overview of the place of mountains in Greek society, literature and mythological thought.

[60] Cf. Peradotto (1990) 120–42.

[61] The image of the bloodthirsty lion is associated with sexually-motivated violence already at iv.333–40; note also the half-wild, half-domesticated nature of the olive trees which keep Odysseus alive and from which he emerges (v.476–87). For all these images, see Scott (1974) 58–68; Moulton (1977) 135–41; Friedrich (1981) 120–5.

[62] For washing-places as an image of settled domestic life, cf. XXII.147–56, and note again the connection between freshly-washed clothes and marriage at vi.27–8.

[63] On the sexual and social dynamics of the action here and the overtones of

motivated by the poet (vi.139–40). All the same, both Homer's audience and Nausikaa herself have been carefully and systematically prepared for a sexual encounter of some sort here, and the air of violence implicit in Odysseus' entrance is patently a part of this.[64] In this case, nothing happens; the hero leaves the princess literally untouched (vi.141–7) and their potential romance never becomes a reality. In Book x matters proceed much further.

Kirke is a formidable and independent woman, who uses deception to capture and destroy men foolish enough to accept her hospitality. Like Penelope on Ithaca, however, she does not sleep with all her visitors, despite the suggestiveness of her initial gesture of invitation (x.230–1), but only feeds them and detains them with her (x.233–43; cf. ii.87–128, esp. 127–8).[65] When Hermes arms Odysseus against her drugs (x.290–2), he tells him that when she tries her usual tricks on him, he is to draw his sword and rush at her as if intent on murder (x.293–5), and her terrified response to this attack is to invite her assailant into her bed (x.321–35; cf. x.296). With Kalypso, Odysseus was unarmed, dependent and utterly unsatisfied; in his initial encounter with Nausikaa, his capacity for specifically sexual violence is very much in evidence but quickly suppressed, along with the scene's other erotic overtones; here in his confrontation with Kirke, female treachery, which carries with it overtones of castration or impotence (x.299–301; cf. Hes. *Th.* 159–81; *h.Ven.* 187–90) and expulsion from the house (x.237–8; cf. Hes. *Th.* 717–33), comes face-to-face with a man prepared to defend himself by whatever means are necessary. The result is an affair powerful and satisfying enough to detain Odysseus on Aiaia for a year and make him forget everything else, including his homecoming (x.467–74).[66] Clearly encounters of this sort are part of what a real marriage is about (cf. I.533–611), despite the hero's saccharine remarks about ὁμοφροσύνη earlier (vi.182–5), and

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rape in particular, see Gutglueck (1988); Jones (1989) 351–2, with the response of de Vries (1990).

[64] The issue of rape has already been raised in an oblique way at iii.132–4 in Nestor's reference to the unjust behavior of some of the Argives during the sack of Troy.

[65] For Kirke's character, see Segal (1968) 419–28. For her connections with Penelope, cf. Beye (1974) 97–8; Pedrick (1988) 91; Marquardt (1988) 239–43; Beye (1993) 164, 167.

[66] On the connections between violence and sexuality in Odysseus' encounter with Kirke, cf. Segal (1968) 425–7; Wohl (1992) 24–5; Beye (1993) 165–7.

all these adventures in fact serve only as prolegomena to Odysseus' reunion with his wife on Ithaca.[67]

Penelope (like Earth and Rhea in the *Theogony* and Hera in the *Iliad*) is both enormously powerful in a straightforward sexual sense (e.g. i.365–6; xviii.245–9) and a master schemer against men (esp. ii.87–106), and Agamemnon warns Odysseus not to trust her, lest he too be murdered upon his return (xi.441–3, 454–6). After the hero has butchered his enemies, on the other hand, Homer compares him specifically to a lion spattered with gore from a cow he has just dragged down and killed (xxii.401–5; cf. xxiii.48). He is thus once again quite emphatically the wild and violent, which has now burst into settled domestic life and shattered it (cf. vi.130–4 ἐς πυκινὸν δόμον ἐλθεῖν; xix.536–50), and his aggression amounts to a powerful assertion of his right to sleep with his wife (esp. xxii.38–41; cf. x.294–7). The most extreme male force thus comes up against extraordinarily profound female cunning here, but an ideally happy ending results nonetheless. Penelope has been consistently faithful to Odysseus during all the many years of his absence and is well aware of the potency of his anger and terrified he may misunderstand her (esp. xxiii.209–10). All the same, she does not yield to (i.e. recognize) him immediately (contrast x.323–35), but instead takes him in (xxiii.177–204), albeit only in order to make a real reunion between them possible (xxiii.205–40).[68] The dark side of their story, meanwhile, plays itself out elsewhere in the house.

Telemachos, Eumaios and Philoitios are all unmarried and by implication virgins, but although Odysseus promises the herdsmen in particular wives if he overcomes his enemies (xxi.213–4; cf. xiv.62–4), they are not initiated sexually here. Instead, they engage in an orgy of bloodshed which supplies everything lacking from the larger tale of the reunion of husband and wife. First the maidservants, whose insubordination consisted above all else in their readiness to leave the house to sleep with the Suitors (esp. xx.6–7; cf. xviii.325; xxii.37), are taken outside and hung, and in their death compared to birds who have found a 'dreadful bed' (xxii.465–73). After this, Melanthios is dragged out of the cruel εὐνή he has been given (xxii.189–200,

[67] Cf. Beye (1974) 93–9, for the simultaneously dangerous and desirable nature of women generally and wives in particular in the *Odyssey*.

[68] For Penelope's behavior and its significance for Odysseus' attempt to escape time and 'normal' patterns of human behavior, see Murnaghan (1987) 139–47.

esp. 195–6), hacked to pieces and *inter alia* castrated (xxii.474–7). Once again, therefore, Homer's story is split in half in a way which points to its deeper concerns: the serving-women die in place of their queen, who has not shared their guilt, while the goatherd is unmanned and banished from bed just as surely as Kirke's male victims are (x.237–41, 300–1; n.b. χαμαιευνάδες x.243). As a result, when the nominally chaste Telemachos, Eumaios and Philoitios are heard of next, they are quite appropriately part of the group celebrating the (re)marriage of Odysseus and Penelope (xxiii.131–47; cf. xxiii.297–9).[69]

The *Odyssey* thus plays off and adapts what seems to have been a powerful and widely known narrative and most likely social pattern, in which the father returns late to his house to be opposed and perhaps overthrown by those who await him there. Despite appearances, the poem insists, the father's return is inevitable, and to adapt oneself to it in advance is to be vouchsafed an apparently illogical promise of a happy ending to one's own story, while to oppose it is to choose an ultimate, brutal punishment. There is a certain amount of hypocrisy implicit in all these judgments, for the standards which the *Odyssey* (like all κλέος) sets for human behavior are in many ways absurdly high: every real boy resents and rebels against his father in one way or another, after all, and if he survives, replaces him; every woman somehow resists her husband's claim to absolute authority over her person and their house, if only by producing children for him; every man falls short of an 'ideal' heroic standard of virility and self-assertion.[70] Rather than stressing all of that, however, Homer's story insists upon the positive aspects of the hero's return and of the restoration of the past and thus of the 'proper order' which results from it. That observation in turn leads to the cognate problem of Odysseus as king.

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[69] For the faithless servant-women as substitute targets of Odysseus' spousal wrath, cf. Wohl (1992) 40 n. 59.

[70] Cf. Olson (1989) 139–43.

CHAPTER NINE

THE RETURN OF THE KING

When, toward the end of Book i of the *Odyssey*, Telemachos announces his intention of publicly ordering the Suitors out of his house (i.372–80), Antinoos suddenly and somewhat unexpectedly raises the question of the Ithacan kingship (i.386–7). Precisely what this office (if that is what it is) involves and how it is connected to the courtship of Penelope and the occupation of her vanished husband's halls remains at this point in the story obscure, at least to us today. Indeed, the profoundly unsettled state of affairs on Odysseus' home island throughout the poem makes its political aspect (e.g. ii.26–7; xxiv.482–3) very difficult to understand generally.[1] Scheria is more stable and, unlike Sparta and Pylos in particular, is described at length by Homer. Even more to the point, despite the fact that the Phaeacians live at the very ends of the earth (ἔσχατοι ἄνδρων) and are thus out of contact with most other men (vi.204–5), they appear to be governed in a fashion quite similar to the Ithacans. I will accordingly follow the lead of Homer himself here and concentrate my initial attention abroad, only returning to Odysseus' native island and the questions about his public position which must be confronted there late and with close to half my story told.

By almost any measure, the Phaeacian town on Scheria must be reckoned a true city and a true community. It has enough houses (cf. vi.9), first of all, that Odysseus is told he will have to ask directions to Alkinoos' palace, outstanding though it is, once he is inside (vi.298–303; cf. vii.22–9), as well as temples of the gods (vi.10), an organized harbor (vi.263–5; vii.43) and a stone-built agora with a shrine of Poseidon at its center (esp. vi.266–7; viii.5; cf. vii.44). In addition, the settlement is surrounded by a high wall (vi.9, 262–3; vii.44–5) and the plowlands outside it have been formally divided among the inhabitants (vi.10; cf. vi.259; vii.26), with special portions

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[1] The most important and detailed study of Homeric political institutions is Carlier (1984) 135–230; Seymour (1908) 78–116, remains readable and informative. For a sceptical view of the historical nature of Homeric kingship, see Drews (1983); for the more traditional view, see Starr (1961).

set aside for the Olympians and the king (vi.291–3). Physically this is a very impressive place, therefore, and at least a match for any real Greek city of the late 8th century B.C.E.[2] The Phaeacian people, meanwhile, seem to feel a strong sense of social unity and even think of themselves as a single, cohesive kin-group (esp. vii.205–6).[3] They share a set of common social values, on the basis of which they censure one another and govern their own behavior (esp. vi.285–8), and have what they at least believe are their own peculiar local talents and abilities (esp. viii.100–3, 246–53; cf. vii.108–11). Although admittedly quarrelsome and contentious (vi.274; vii.16–7, 32–3; viii.158–66), moreover, they are willing to settle at least some of their disputes through mediation (vii.74; cf. viii.396–409), and much of their hostility appears to be reserved in any case for outsiders (esp. vii.32–3) or for those who think themselves too good for the group as a whole (vi.282–5). Politically, there can be little doubt they are governed in the first instance by something approximating a hereditary kingship. Alkinoos' father was once lord (ἄνασσε) over them (vii.62) and was sufficiently their master to lead them from their original home near the Kyklopes to Scheria (vi.7–8) and to be given sole credit for the construction and organization of their city and its walls there (vi.9–10; cf. xi.262–5).[4] When he and his son Rhexenor died (vi.11; vii.64–5), his second (and apparently younger) son Alkinoos began to rule (ἄρχε, ἄνασσε) in turn (vi.12; vii.10–1), and now Alkinoos' own beloved child Laodamas ('Master of the People') sits by his throne (vii.170–1; cf. iii.39), as if to signal his eventual intention to succeed

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[2] Finley (1978) 155–6, followed by Morris (1986) 100, attacks Snodgrass (1971) 435, for calling the Phaeacian city a *polis*, apparently because the poet pays no attention to the residential quarters. This is beside the point; there are many houses within the walls (vi.9), but neither Homer nor Odysseus finds them as interesting as the magnificent public facilities (esp. vii.43–5). For the rise of the historical πόλις, see Starr (1957), who lays too much emphasis on collective justice, especially in regard to homicide, as the most important test of civic unity, since even by the time of Drakon revenge-murders were only marginally restrained by law; cf. Gagarin (1981), esp. 117–24. Scully (1990) 81–91, offers an overview of the archaeological evidence and attempts to integrate it with the *Iliad* in particular.

[3] Hainsworth, in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) ad loc., takes Alkinoos' remark about the closeness of the Phaeacians, Kyklopes and Giants to the gods as signalling not actual genetic kinship, but only a special relationship of some sort. Both the Giants and the Kyklopes were traditionally said to have a divine pedigree (Hes. *Th.* 139–40, 183–6), however, and this seems the obvious point of the comparison. For artificial kinship-structures as part of the post-Mycenean process of community formation, see Donlan (1985), esp. 306–8.

[4] On ἄναξ and ἀνάσσω in Homer, see Vlachos (1974) 90–106; Carlier (1984) 142, 215–21.

to it and his father's eagerness to see that happen.[5] Alkinoos is called a 'king' (βασιλεύς) at a number of points in the text (e.g. vii.46, 55), and the Phaeacians listen to him 'as to a god' (vii.11; cf. vi.12) and follow his lead in everything (e.g. viii.46–7; xiii.179–87; cf. vii.11). Indeed, Nausikaa says their 'power and might' depend directly on him (vi.196–7; cf. xi.346, 353). He is also remarkably wealthy (vii.81–133), at least in part because he enjoys the use of a special piece of land (τέμενος) just outside the city walls (vi.293–4) and is awarded an extra share of any public prize (γέρας) as well (vii.10–1).[6]

In addition to Alkinoos, Phaeacian society features a dozen other 'distinguished leading kings' (viii.390–1), at least some of whom are referred to variously as 'famous kings' (vi.54), 'Zeus-bred kings' (vii.49), 'elders' (vii.189), 'scepter-holding kings' (viii.41), 'the best of the Phaeacians' (viii.108) and 'counsel-bearers of the Phaeacians' (xiii.12). It is representatives of this group who are drinking in the palace when Odysseus first arrives there (vii.49–50, 98–9, 136–7), while the rest of the people are scattered about the town (esp. vii.39–40; cf. vii.14–7, 30–1), and they who are present to hear him tell his story on the next night as well (e.g. viii.536; xiii.7–14).[7] Alkinoos at one point calls himself only the thirteenth among these men (viii.391), and it may be that in their capacity as elders and public advisors (σκηπτοῦχοι viii.40; βουληφόροι xiii.12) they are all formally on a par with him (cf. vi.53–5). Other characters regularly address Nausikaa's father alone as 'conspicuous among all the people' (πάντων ἀριδείκετε λαῶν; e.g. viii.382, 401), however, and his basic social preeminence is obvious.[8] The term βασιλεύς is thus apparently used in two rather different

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[5] Homer never says specifically that Rhexenor was older than Alkinoos, but he clearly married first, since he had a child of marriageable age when he died and his brother was still single. As Carlier (1984) 187–90, points out, primogeniture is treated as a self-evident principle of royal succession at XIII.354–5; XV.165–7, although this is among the gods and other factors (i.e. wisdom and brutal physical might) also come into play.

[6] On the τέμενος, see Carlier (1984) 158–60; Donlan (1989). On the content and character of the γέρας, see Carlier (1984) 151–62.

[7] For the complex problem of exactly how this group of Scherian 'kings' is structured and subdivided and thus who is at each of the banquets there, see Carlier (1984) 145–6.

[8] Thus he regularly hosts the other Phaeacian 'kings' in his house and exercises considerable control over them and their possessions in return (esp. xiii.7–14). It is here that the comparison drawn by Qviller (1981) between the Homeric king and the Burmese 'big-man' is most telling, although nothing suggests Homeric kings ever damage themselves economically by their generosity (esp. i.392–3; xiii.14–5). On the social dynamics of gift-giving in the *Odyssey*, see Donlan (1982).

senses on Scheria, both to refer to the single dominant male in the community and, in the plural, to designate a larger aristocratic circle.[9] On precisely what grounds these 'kings' are chosen or identified is not clear from the text, although Echeneos is said to be distinguished for his age and knowledge (vii.155–7) and they must all be relatively wealthy (cf. xi.340–1), since they make Odysseus substantial gifts of gold and garments and a bronze cauldron out of their immediate household stores (viii.390–5, 398–9; xiii.13–9). What is apparent is that they can meet in closed session and come to significant decisions there (vii.189–94) and that they have the unilateral right (or power) to establish general levies on the populace in support of what they take to be appropriate expenditures (xiii.14–5).[10]

As for the general free population of Scheria, the group which attends the games in Book viii is referred to vaguely as 'a great throng, boundless in numbers' (viii.109–10), and they must therefore be fairly numerous in comparison with their social superiors.[11] Some serve as heralds (e.g. viii.8, 47, 256–7), others as public stewards of games and dances (viii.258–60), and one is a bard (esp. viii.62–4); most seem to be sailors, ship-builders and -outfitters (vi.268–72; vii.108–9) or farmers (vi.259; vii.26). The only point in the poem at which they exercise any direct political influence is at vi.53–5, where Alkinoos and other 'famous kings' are seen heading off early in the morning 'to a council (εἰς βουλήν) where the noble Phaeacians were calling them.'[12] That the populace at large has issued this summons shows Homer is not referring here to a closed king's council of the Iliadic sort, while his failure to use the metrically equivalent εἰς ἀγορήν suggests this is not to be understood as an event precisely parallel to the Ithacan Assembly in Book ii (cf. i.90). Instead, this must be a meeting of yet another sort, and the clear implication of the text is that

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[9] On βασιλεύς in Homer, see Carlier (1984) 143–50, 222–8. Gschnitzer (1965) 101–5, offers as a general translation 'der Erster,' which is correct as far as it goes but still inadequate. Drews (1983) 102–3, concentrates on the use of βασιλεύς with the genitive and thus avoids a number of instances which run contrary to his overall thesis.

[10] Cf. xix.196–8, where the Stranger claims to have furnished Odysseus' men with supplies raised from the Cretan populace (δημόθεν).

[11] The words Φαιήκων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες are used not only to refer to the Phaeacian nobles (e.g. vii.136; xiii.186) but also as a form of polite address for the people as a whole as well (e.g. viii.11, 26), but there can be little doubt we are dealing with two distinct groups (esp. viii.107–10).

[12] I take ἀγαυός here to be a term of general commendation without any implication of social class. On councils generally, see Carlier (1984) 183–7.

the local leaders are being asked to discuss some matter of public concern in open session in their role of 'counsel-bearers' (xiii.12) 'who have authority among the populace' (viii.390–1).[13] That the people themselves intend to take part in the debate which ensues upon this invitation is not apparent, and when Alkinoos introduces his guest in their presence in Book viii and suggests to the elders how he should be treated (viii.24–42), it is worth noting that they say and do nothing. That the people's opinion matters is nonetheless evident, not only from the fact that the discussion anticipated in Books vi is to go on before them, but also from Homer's insistence that Athena brought them together and made Odysseus more handsome in their eyes specifically out of concern for his homecoming (viii.7–23).[14]

This is the most detailed picture the *Odyssey* provides of a human society outside of Ithaca, and its basic outlines are clear. The Phaeacians live under the principal authority of an extremely wealthy and powerful man, whose position has a strong hereditary component and some centralizing tendencies.[15] He in turn is surrounded by twelve other men, at least some of whom serve as his close companions and as public counsellors and judges, and in the latter (but not the former) capacity exercise a power and influence formally equivalent to his own. The people as a whole have some limited authority to summon their leaders to meet and speak before them, but their real influence and control comes from talk and gossip (cf. vi.274–85), and the power of their opinion makes them more significant politically and socially than they might at first appear to be.[16] Phaeacian society has obviously fantastic elements (e.g. vii.56–62, 91–4; viii.557–

[13] At iii.127, Nestor also distinguishes between a βουλή and an ἀγορή, and although he is speaking of events at Troy, nothing obviously entitles us to assume he is using the former word in its Iliadic sense. What the matter of public importance is which has caused the Phaeacians to call this meeting is left unclear, although it would lend considerable poignancy to the rest of Books vi and vii to assume it is the question of who Nausikaa will marry. Note that a similar subject is debated in the Ithacan Assembly in Book ii.

[14] Cf. the eagerness the people show to watch the games in which the local young men compete (viii.109–10); fortunately for the prestige of Alkinoos' house, his sons win two of the five contests (viii.123, 130).

[15] Note also that the local spring, usually found just outside of town (x.105–8; xvii.204–6), is instead located before the royal palace on Scheria (vii.129–31), although there is in addition a κρήνη in Athena's extramural sanctuary (vi.291–2).

[16] Beneath all these groups, of course, are slaves, whose presence in the community is repeatedly acknowledged (e.g. vi.18–9, 52–3, 71–3; vii.7–13, 103–6) but whose direct political power must be even more limited than that of the individuals they serve.

63) and is enormously wealthy and elaborate (vi.262–7; vii.43–5; xi.340–1); Ithaca, on the other hand, is somewhat poor and backward (esp. iii.193; iv.605–9) and caught up in a social and political crisis.[17] All the same, enough can be reconstructed of the political structure of Odysseus' native island to show it is substantially the same as that of Alkinoos' kingdom and thus shed some light on the larger social significance of the hero's return.

Although this has sometimes been denied, first of all, there is considerable evidence within the poem for the existence of Ithacan society and a true Ithacan state.[18] The local people talk about the behavior of one another and worry about what may be said of themselves (e.g. ii.101–2; xxi.323–33; xxiii.148–52), and this alone suggests they feel a considerable sense of community. So too Penelope not only notes that the Thesprotians were once 'joined in alliance with us' (ἡμῖν ἄρθμιοι ἦσαν), which implies the existence of a collective local identity, but makes it clear that that agreement was regarded as binding on all inhabitants of the island, whether they approved of it individually or not (xvi.424–9). Indeed, the collective punishment of individuals who offend popular sensibilities or threaten the local reputation is a real and sometimes worrisome possibility in the poem (ii.192–3; xvi.376–82; xxii.216–23; xxiv.426–38, 463–8), and Telemachos accordingly asks the men in the Assembly to consider what will be said of them by others in the region if they allow his house to be ruined (ii.65–6). As Aigyptios' opening question in the Assembly (esp. ii.32) makes clear, finally, the Ithacans are well acquainted with the notion that some matters may be of general public (as opposed to merely private) interest, and Telemachos must in fact routinely assure his hosts abroad that he has come in connection with his own affairs rather than those of his people (iii.82; cf. iv.312–4).[19] Although no formal public meeting has been held on Ithaca for

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[17] This is not to suggest that Ithaca is presented as truly impoverished, but the disguised Athena's local boosterism (xiii.244–7) does need to be taken with a grain of salt.

[18] The contrary thesis has been put forward by Halverson (1986) 119–21; Rihll (1986) 86–8. My overall conclusions about the developmental stage of Ithacan society also differ considerably from those of Runciman (1982), esp. 354–60, who does not deal with the Homeric evidence in a systematic way.

[19] Rihll (1986) 87–8, essentially following Finley (1978), places too much emphasis on the οἶκος as the fundamental unit of social organization in the Homeric world; cf. Carlier (1984) 182–4. Such a radically atomized style of life is referred to in the poem, but only among the barbarous Kyklopes (ix.112–5).

close to twenty years (ii.26–7), therefore, a basic sense of community clearly exists there, and when heralds are sent out at the beginning of Book ii, a crowd gathers rapidly (ii.6–8).[20]

That there is a special position referred to as 'king in Ithaca' (ἐν ... Ἰθάκῃ βασιλεύς) and distinct from simple aristocratic status is apparent from the initial exchange between Telemachos and Antinoos at i.383–96, as well as from both Eurymachos' subsequent remarks about the allegedly extraordinary ambitions of the latter (xxii.50–3) and the ability of Mentor and Athena to apply the unambiguous verb ἀνάσσω to the power Odysseus once exercised (ii.234 = v.12; cf. vii.11, 62).[21] The position of chief βασιλεύς brings with it considerable personal honor (τιμή) and wealth (i.392–3) and implies general recognition of a man's local preeminence (xv.518–22).[22] In addition, a large grant of arable land (τέμενος) and other special shares (γέρας) (xi.175, 184–5; xvii.299; cf. xv.522), reminiscent of the privileges awarded Alkinoos on Scheria (vi.293; vii.10–1), accompany it and help to show this is not merely an informal matter of comparative social status, as Halverson in particular would have it.[23] The considerable independent power and authority of the βασιλεύς is also

[20] A number of these points have been made previously by Thomas (1966) 9–12.

[21] The existence of an Ithacan kingship has been denied by Halverson (1986) 119–21, reacting primarily against Finley (1978). Drews (1983) 105–9, concedes that the word βασιλεύς has an obviously exclusive sense in the way Telemachos uses it in Book i, but ignores that passage and others like it when he concludes that in the *Odyssey* local government rests in the hands of a number of equally powerful *basileis*. References to the exclusive leadership of Zeus and Kronos in the Hesiodic poems are also considerably more frequent than Drews acknowledges; add *Th.* 71, 462, 476; cf. 883; *Op.* 111. (Drews argues that *Th.* 886, 892, 923 are most likely later intrusions into the text, but the deutero-Hesiodic sections of the text have generally been assumed to begin well after line 900; cf. West [1966] ad 881–1020, who ventures to push the break back to between 900 and 901). There are also more references to human monarchs than Drews notes; add *Th.* 957, 992, 995. Nor does anything in the text suggest that the human 'kings' referred to repeatedly at the beginning of the *Theogony* (80, 82, 88, 96) are members of a small aristocratic circle (cf. *Op.* 38, 248, 261, 263) rather than individual local monarchs. (*Th.* 434 is slightly more ambiguous).

[22] For the social complexity of the term τιμή in Homer, see Riedinger (1976).

[23] Halverson (1986) 121. Halverson 120, tries to dispose of ἄνασσε at ii.234 = v.12 by insisting that "the verb need carry no more political connotation than does Telemachos' use of the noun when he says he is determined to be ἄναξ in his own household" (i.397–8), but this is to approach the problem backwards. Telemachos' point is that he will be the absolute and unconditional lord over his own servants and possessions, regardless of who is βασιλεύς in Ithaca (i.394–6), and he accordingly uses a verb derived from the loaded term ἄναξ to describe the style of authority to which he aspires. On the king's ability to extract 'gifts' from the local population, see Carlier (1984) 160–2.

apparent in the fact that Homer's characters regard it as noteworthy that Odysseus ruled (ἄνασσε) kindly and gently (ii.230–4 = v.8–12; cf. ii.70–2), for the implication is that he was free to act instead in the arbitrary and overbearing manner Penelope claims is the standard practice of kings (iv.690–2).[24] As for the positive public duties and responsibilities of the office (for that is clearly what it is), the fact that Odysseus never built a wall around his city (contrast vi.9) merely reflects the lack of any need for one, while his failure to fight in the Ithacans' defense in the course of the poem is explained by the simple fact that they are not attacked.[25] If they were, he would presumably take a leading role in formulating a response (cf. xxi.16–21), and it is accordingly worth noting that when the local forces went to Troy, they travelled under his leadership, if not his complete control.[26] That Odysseus in particular is chief βασιλεύς on Ithaca seems to be the result of a combination of factors. He is far and away the richest man in the neighborhood (xiv.96–9), first of all, and has a reputation as a great fighter and counsellor as well (xvi.241–2).[27] In addition, although he lacks Alkinoos' divine pedigree (vii.61–3), he too is qualified to rule in part simply because his father did before him, and under normal circumstances his position ought to pass on to Telemachos in turn (i.387).[28] Given that he has only one son (esp. xvi.119–20) and is himself missing and apparently dead, therefore, the boy's death would seemingly throw the competition for the kingship wide open.[29] Even as it is, Telemachos admits, the succession is

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[24] On one occasion, however, Odysseus appears to have acted in such a fashion, by saving Antinoos' father from the legitimate wrath of his fellow-citizens (xvi.424–30).

[25] *Pace* Halverson (1986) 120. A sheep-raid on Ithaca is described in xxi.18–9, but that is not the sort of thing against which walls can guard, and the Ithacans do not obviously have much else to steal.

[26] *Pace* Halverson (1986) 120, the fact that not all the Ithacans chose to accompany Odysseus to Troy (esp. ii.17–22) does not imply that he attempted to persuade them to go and failed; this was an opportunity rather than an obligation, and participation was presumably voluntary and undertaken with an eye toward personal profit (cf. x.40–2).

[27] Cf. Carlier (1984) 195, and note the reflection of these values in the names of Nausithoos' sons (vii.63) Rhexenor ('Breaker of Men') and Alkinoos ('Powerfully Minded' *vel sim.*). When Telemachos speaks up boldly to the Suitors and threatens to kill them (i.368–82), therefore, the possibility that he may lay claim to the throne immediately enters Antinoos' mind (i.386–7).

[28] The otherwise careful survey of the evidence for the right of succession to the Homeric throne by Carlier (1984) 187–90, largely ignores the situation on Ithaca.

[29] The same would be true were father and son both to be put to death by the populace, a possibility which seems to be in the offing at xxiv.420–70.

far more than a simple matter of inheritance and could be disrupted were a more likely candidate, i.e. a man whose personal and social advantages somehow outweighed his own, to emerge (i.394–6).

In addition to this single, preeminent βασιλεύς, Ithaca is inhabited by 'many other kings (βασιλῆες) of the Achaians, young and old' (i.394–5; cf. xviii.64–5), precisely like Scheria (e.g. viii.390–1), and some of these men, including Halitherses and Mentor (esp. ii.253–4; xvii.68–9), are also Odysseus' special companions or ἑταῖροι. Once again there is no indication in the text as to how these secondary local 'kings' are chosen or identified, although it seems a reasonable assumption that wealth, physical strength and eloquence all play a role, so that this status too must normally (although not necessarily) be passed on from one generation to the next.[30] At any rate, these men certainly take a special part in governing the island (cf. viii.390–1), and Laertes 'and the other γέροντες' are accordingly said to have sent Odysseus off in his youth to pursue a general local claim against the Messenians (xxi.21). At least some of them also have special seats in the marketplace (ii.14; cf. xvii.68–70), at least in part for use in their capacity as judges (cf. xii.439–401; XVIII.503–8).[31]

As for more popular institutions, Aigyptios refers at the beginning of Book ii to both a local Assembly (ἀγορή) and something which he terms a θόωκος (ii.26). As far as one can tell, an Ithacan Assembly is an occasion for free-wheeling open argument and debate, and serves to allow any individual, young or old, to bring what he regards as matters of importance to public attention (ii.28–32; cf. ii.42–9) in the hope collective action will be taken on them (ii.64–72).[32] When Odysseus was dispatched to Messene, on the other hand, it was not

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[30] For the inheritance of physical property by the son, cf. i.397–8; for inherited ability in speaking, cf. iii.124; iv.611; for the inheritance of more specifically physical characteristics, cf. i.208–9. Some Ithacans are clearly 'better' than others (esp. ii.51), but there is little evidence in the text for the existence of rigidly defined 'classes' of free men (*pace* Morris [1986] 114). On the use of terms such as ἄριστος and κακός in the *Odyssey* without reference to birth, see Calhoun (1934).

[31] Although Rihll (1986) 89, is right to say that Odysseus does not judge because he is king, therefore, the two positions naturally overlap, since the βασιλεύς is also a γέρων (esp. xxi.21). Cf. xi.568–71; Carlier (1984) 172–7.

[32] On the Assembly and its rules (or customs) of procedure, see Geddes (1984) 31–2. Halverson (1985) 138; (1986) 122–3, argues there is no reason to believe Assemblies are normally anything but the rarest of phenomena, but the range of matters which Aigyptios suggests they are capable of taking up (ii.28–32) would seem to imply rather frequent meetings; cf. ix.112, where a general lack of Assemblies is presented as one distinctive characteristic of the allegedly barbarous Kyklopes (ix.112).

the δῆμος which was responsible for this, but Laertes and the other local elders (xxi.21), and elsewhere in the poem Assemblies lead only to mass action or the lack of it.[33] The most economical conclusion would accordingly seem to be that the decision described in Book xxi grew out of a θόωκος (cf. ii.26), which must then be a public session of the local γέροντες reminiscent of the council to which Alkinoos and other 'famous kings' are summoned at vi.54–5. Thus in Book xv as well Eumaios reports that he was kidnapped from Syrie at a moment when his father, the local chief βασιλεύς (xv.412–4), had gone off with his usual companions and dinner-guests 'to a sitting and public discussion' (ἐς θῶκον . . . δήμοιό τε φῆμιν xv.466–8).[34] These men are presumably the Syrien equivalent of the aristocrats who regularly eat and drink with Alkinoos (esp. vii.98–9; xiii.8–9) and with Odysseus as well,[35] and are apparently going off to sit down together in the agora in their customary seats (θῶκοι, whence θόωκος/θῶκος; esp. ii.14; cf. xvii.68–70), where they can talk with one another and (unlike during the private session which preceded it) with or perhaps merely in the presence of the populace at large (δήμοιό τε φῆμιν).[36]

Odysseus' native island is thus organized politically in ways which constantly recall Scheria. There is a single chief βασιλεύς, whose position is to some extent hereditary but also depends on his wealth, intelligence and fighting ability, and who enjoys considerable

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[33] Thus in Book ii Telemachos' complaint evokes no communal response, but Antinoos is aware that a subsequent Assembly could take direct and drastic action against the Suitors (xvi.376–82). Indeed, the δῆμος once resolved to kill his own father and seize his property when he offended them (xvi.424–9), although that decision could just as well represent a spontaneous explosion of popular feeling of the sort seen in Book xxiv, when the Suitors' relatives gather in the agora and attempt to foment a general uprising against Odysseus.

[34] Compare v.3–4, where the gods take their seats for a similar session (θῶκόνδε καθίζανον) with Zeus preeminent among them, although the only audience present to hear the debate which follows is Homer's.

[35] That Odysseus used to dine with the other chief men on Ithaca is apparent from Eurymachos' report that as a boy he often sat upon his knee and was given meat and wine (xvi.442–4), which ought to mean his father was at the banquet (cf. XXII.496–8). For reciprocal feasting among noble groups on Ithaca, cf. i.374–5; ii.139–40; xi.185–7.

[36] Similar seats are sometimes located before the royal palace (iii.406–12; xi.568–71), but this cannot be where Ktesios and his companions go, since his absence gives the Phoenician nurse a chance to pillage the house (xv.465–70). Jeanmaire (1939) 53, followed by Carlier (1984) 184, suggests the king and the others have merely gone off to take the evening air and keep their fingers on the public pulse, but this does inadequate justice to the word θῶκον.

independent power and substantial public privileges; there are also numerous other local 'kings,' subsidiary to him in some ways but simultaneously his peers and thus potentially his rivals; in their capacity as community elders, these men are entrusted with substantial authority over judgment and other matters of general concern; the great mass of the populace are subject to them in this sense, but are also free and independent, if only as a result of the sharpness of their tongues (esp. xxi.323–9). The Ithacan people appear somewhat more politically active than their Phaeacian counterparts, in that they can and do hold independent and sometimes rebellious Assemblies, while their king lacks Alkinoos' obvious divine right to the throne (although cf. xxiv.443–9) and is even faced with a limited popular revolt at one point in the story (esp. xxiv.426–35, 463–8). In broad general terms, however, the two systems are identical and we are clearly dealing here with a single poetic model, less well-developed versions of which can also be detected in Sparta and Pylos.[37] Unfortunately, Odysseus (unlike Alkinoos) has been absent from his home for almost twenty years and that has led to a series of interlinked social and political crises there.

That the position of chief βασιλεύς on Ithaca is generally regarded as vacant when the *Odyssey* begins is by no means clear, and nowhere in the poem is there any indication that a man of this stature can be replaced by anyone other than his son so long as he is understood to be alive and likely to return. Thus in Mycenae it is only after Agamemnon comes back and is assassinated that Aigisthos rules as ἄναξ in his place (iii.304–5), despite having seduced Klytemestra much earlier (iii.269–75), and so too Odysseus' γέρας and τεμένεα remain secure for his family during the long war at Troy (xi.184–5).[38] In the normal course of human affairs, however, a man who vanishes for many years must eventually be given up, and when that occurs on Ithaca there will be at least two significant consequences:

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[37] Menelaos, like Alkinoos, is tremendously wealthy (iv.43–6, 71–82) and enjoys extraordinary power over the cities and people subject to his authority as ἄναξ (iv.174–7). Nestor is called ἄναξ (iii.388) and 'shepherd of the people' (e.g. iii.469), has his own circle of ἑταῖροι with whom he feasts (iii.32–3), and is apparently a public judge and counsellor like his father and a scepter-bearer (iii.406–12; cf. XVIII.503–8). All the same, he is seen primarily in the role of *pater familias* (esp. iii.32, 386–7, 412–30), another important image of kingship in the *Odyssey* (ii.233–4 = v.11–2).

[38] Even Oedipus continues to rule at Thebes after the truth about his marriage becomes known (xi.275–6).

a new chief king will have to be identified (esp. i.395–6; xi.175–6) and Penelope will become openly and undeniably eligible for remarriage. These are technically separate matters, but in practice they overlap and complicate one another considerably.[39]

Although Telemachos has a basic hereditary right to his father's position (i.387), had the question of control of it been raised while he was still a minor, it could well have passed elsewhere (xi.174–6).[40] Now that he has reached ἥβη (esp. xviii.269–71), on the other hand, he has at least a fighting chance to retain his family's hold on power, although the question of who will be chief βασιλεύς remains an open one (esp. i.394–6) and is only made more difficult by the problem of Penelope. The Suitors and their allies have grown convinced Odysseus is dead or will at least never return (esp. ii.182–3; xvii.253; cf. xxiv.460), and accordingly believe they are pursuing an eligible and extremely desirable (esp. i.365–6; xviii.212–3, 245–9) woman who is for some reason behaving very badly (esp. ii.87–8).[41] All the same, they are not after Odysseus' estate or the social advantages which might accompany it. If Penelope remarries while Telemachos is still alive, virtually everyone in the poem agrees, she will leave the house and everything in it behind and go off to live with her new husband (e.g. ii.130–3; xv.15–9; xviii.270; xix.577–81 = xxi.75–9; xx.334–7; xxi.103–4, 314–6; cf. i.397–8); if the boy is killed before that, the property will be divided up among his enemies, although the house itself will stay with his mother and whoever marries her (ii.332–6; xvi.384–6; xvii.79–81). In either case, no sizeable percent of the estate will accrue to Penelope's new husband and there can thus be no question of anyone other than Telemachos attempting to use Odysseus' wealth as a springboard to the kingship.[42] Even more to the point, there is

[39] Finley (1978) 88–91, in particular jumbles the issues of Penelope and the kingship together and accordingly finds the story of the *Odyssey* extremely puzzling and confused, and his enormous influence has made discussion of these problems far more difficult than it ought ever to have been.

[40] Note that the conversation in the Underworld in Book xi takes place only a year or so after the fall of Troy, at which point Telemachos can be only about ten years old.

[41] Indeed, Penelope herself treated Odysseus' death as a given in her conversation with the Suitors when the courtship began (ἐπεὶ θάνε δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς ii.96 = xix.141 = xxiv.131), and whatever her real convictions at the time, the idea must have made sense to them and fit their own presuppositions. I assume Eurymachos' remarks about the possibility of news of Odysseus' return at i.408 are mere hypocrisy.

[42] Cf. Halverson (1986) 121–3. Athena does claim (and Telemachos seems to

no indication in the text that the Suitors as a group have any designs on Odysseus' position or any intention of eliminating the claims of his family to it. What they are after is simply Penelope (esp. xxi.70–2, 154–62), whose beauty fascinates and maddens them (esp. i.365–7; xviii.245–9).[43] To court her is implicitly to raise the question of the succession, since if Odysseus is admitted to be dead, someone else must take his place in the community (i.395–6; xvii.175–6) and his son is not yet obviously ready to do so, at least in the Suitors' eyes (esp. iv.663–8). Although the man Penelope marries will not automatically become βασιλεύς thereby, therefore, her status is of considerable importance.[44] As the discussions in which Telemachos engages in Book xv make clear, there are also other connections between the two questions.

When Athena awakens Telemachos in the middle of the night in Sparta, she tells him that Penelope is about to marry Eurymachos and that he had therefore best return home as quickly as possible (esp. xv.14–8). Telemachos learns nothing more about his mother's plans until he speaks with Eumaios in the hut in Book xvi and discovers he has been deceived (xvi.31–9). Even before he leaves Pylos, however, he has concluded that Eurymachos intends to get control not only of Penelope but also of Odysseus' γέρας, which goes along with and is symbolic of the position of chief βασιλεύς (esp. xi.174–6), and adds that the local population 'now regard him as a god' (xv.518–22; cf. vii.11). Although Penelope's hand does not automatically bring the throne with it, therefore, Telemachos' remark suggests that a natural informal linkage may exist between the two, at

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believe) that Penelope might take some of the household's moveable property with her given the opportunity, but this is at least presented as illegitimate behavior (xv.19–23; cf. xxi.344–53).

[43] Cf. Rose (1975) 138; Halverson (1986) 126; *pace* Finley (1978) 90–1. For no obvious reason, Finley 88, flatly denies Penelope's charms; see the just criticisms of Halverson 125–6.

[44] Finkelberg (1991), esp. 306–7, argues that the kingship on Ithaca (and indeed throughout the heroic world) is best understood as passed on through the female line via exogamy. This would imply that Penelope's father is an Ithacan and was in fact king before Odysseus, but there is no hint of this in the poem and the story as a whole is instead predicated on the notion that Telemachos has no powerful local allies. It accordingly seems more likely that Penelope was sent to Ithaca from elsewhere, just as Antikleia was before her (cf. xix.399–413) and in the same fashion that Odysseus' sister Ktimene was dispatched to Same (xv.363–7). Finkelberg's hypothesis is also certainly wrong in the cases of Sparta (since Menelaos sends his only legitimate daughter away to Neoptolemos in marriage [iv.3–14]) and Pylos (where Nestor rules in place of his father [iii.406–12; xi.281–6]).

least for certain men.[45] Eurymachos shares with Antinoos the distinction of being one of the two best men among the Suitors and thus among the Ithacans generally (iv.628–9; xxi.186–7; cf. xviii.64–5), and is a clever talker (esp. xvi.435–48; xxii.45–59) and apparently quite wealthy to boot (xv.17–8; xviii.295–6). If he adds to these general qualifications possession of the old king's wife as well as of any property she may illicitly bring with her from his house (xv.19–23), it is easy to see how the routinely defeatist (e.g. iii.208–9) Telemachos could think his rival has a credible claim to the throne, especially given the instability of his own position (esp. xvi.128).[46] The question of Eurymachos' intentions is in one sense purely theoretical, since Athena's remarks are a lie and there is no certain indication elsewhere in the poem that he actually has his eye on the position of chief βασιλεύς. The same cannot be said of Antinoos, and that fact marks him out from the rest of the Suitors and points to the true complexity of the situation on Ithaca and in Odysseus' halls.

Antinoos is wealthy (cf. xvi.424–9; xviii.292–4) and apparently well-born (cf. ii.50–1) and is regarded as by far the most outstanding of the local young men (xxii.29–30), especially as regards intelligence and speaking ability (xvi.418–20). Odysseus himself, in fact, declares that he seems to be 'the best of the Achaians' ('Αχαιῶν/ ὤριστος) and resembles a king (xvii.415–6). Antinoos is also obsessed with the question of the leading political position on Ithaca and thus the problem posed by Telemachos, who he recognizes has a legitimate claim to it (i.387), but whom he initially holds in complete contempt (esp. iv.643–4, 664) and treats as if he had little sense and no insight into his own situation (esp. ii.301–8). When the boy speaks up against the Suitors at the end of Book i, therefore, it is specifically Antinoos who responds with the wish that he might never become βασιλεύς on the island (i.386–7), just as he is the one who organizes and heads

[45] Carlier (1984) 207, makes a similar point, but misestimates Penelope's options and the extent of her claim to Odysseus' house. *Pace* Carlier, the Suitors do not exhibit any fear of the possibility she might return to Ikarios' house; indeed, Antinoos and Eurymachos both urge this strongly (ii.113–4, 195–7).

[46] So too in Mycenae, although Aigisthos did not become king by seducing Klytemestra, he did take power when the position fell vacant after Agamemnon's death and during the minority of his son (iii.304–5), and it is difficult to believe the presence of his predecessor's wife in his bed damaged his prospects in any way. *Pace* Halverson (1986) 122, while Aigisthos' treatment of Agamemnon is unsavory, nothing in the text suggests his reign was any less legitimate for all of that, and there is no evidence he exercised a reign of terror over Mycenae. (For iii.305, cf. III.183.)

the Suitors' ambush later (iv.669–72, 776–9) and then, when it fails, urges a second attempt on his rival's life (esp. xvi.371–2) even after his companions have obviously lost their taste for such intrigue (cf. xvi.393–406).[47] It is also Antinoos who relentlessly (and somewhat tastelessly) organizes and drives forward the contest of the bow (esp. xxi.85–97, 141–3, 168–84), initially convinced he will be able to accomplish the feat even if no-one else can (xxi.96–7). To win Penelope in this way would not make him king of Ithaca in and of itself. Just as in the hypothetical case of Eurymachos, however, it would add an important stamp of legitimacy to his claim (cf. xv.521–2) at this crucial moment by identifying him as a man able to fill Odysseus' shoes (cf. xxi.93–7), as Telemachos apparently cannot (xxi.128–39), a fact which can be expected to be advertised throughout the island (cf. xxi.249–55, 323–9).[48] Indeed, Eurymachos ultimately says outright that Antinoos' real ambition all along was much less for Penelope's hand than for the social pre-eminence which would also have required him to eliminate Telemachos (xxii.48–53);[49] clearly he was not interested in repeating the mistake of Aigisthos, who failed to eliminate Agamemnon's son when he seized power and ultimately died at his hands (e.g. i.40–3; iii.306–8). When Odysseus has the chance to kill any one of the Suitors with an unexpected shot before the real fighting in his halls begins, therefore, it is Antinoos he chooses (xxii.6–8), and when he subsequently catalogues the crimes of the Suitors who remain alive, he makes no mention of any larger political conspiracy or of the plot against his son (xxii.35–40). As Eurymachos quickly points out, those are crimes worthy of death and Antinoos has paid the appropriate price for them (xxii.48–54). While

[47] The first half of Telemachos' reply to Antinoos in Book i, in which he asks whether Antinoos really means to imply it is a bad thing to be king (esp. i.391), can accordingly be read as a bitterly sarcastic comment on his enemy's ambitions, which his observation that there are many other possible candidates for the position (i.394–6) simultaneously undercuts.

[48] Antinoos' failure to compete in the contest once everyone else has failed (xxi.258–68) can certainly be read as a sign of cowardice, but it might also be taken as an indication that he realizes he does not need Penelope any longer. If Odysseus is universally acknowledged to be lost and Telemachos is not his equal, after all, his own claim to the throne is overpowering, regardless of whom he might marry, and there is little point in risking his reputation in a public trial of strength, particularly now that Eurymachos' inadequacy has been exposed.

[49] I thus take Eurymachos' remark at xxii.50–3 not as a denial that Antinoos wanted Penelope (cf. xviii.285–94), but as an assertion that she was for him only a means to an end.

the others followed his lead in behaving outrageously (xxii.46–7), however, that is the extent of their guilt, so that for what they have done a monetary settlement is conceivably appropriate (xxii.54–9).[50] Eurymachos is an oily and deceitful character (esp. xvi.435–48; cf. i.400–4) and it may be that his own ambitions were more substantial than he acknowledges here. All the same, the fact that Odysseus rejects Eurymachos' offer of compensation out of hand (xxii.60–7) does not mean there is nothing to the distinction he attempts to draw among the Suitors. Anyone of them would presumably have been happy to become chief βασιλεύς on Ithaca, were he personally qualified and did the opportunity present itself; as Telemachos notes with studied understatement early on, 'it is no bad thing to be king' (i.392). All the same, their only real and active interest is in Penelope, whom they have mistakenly concluded is an unprotected widow and whose house they have accordingly attempted to plunder. Homer's story ends with an emphatic correction of this misapprehension and its consequences. What all this might mean, however, remains an open and very important question.

Morris has argued recently that the nature of oral composition is such that there must be a fairly direct connection between the institutions and customs depicted in a Homeric song and the society in which it was performed.[51] Poets quickly dropped or modified ideas or patterns of behavior which ceased to make immediate sense to

[50] The thesis of Finley (1978) and others that the *Odyssey* is the story of an aristocratic conspiracy intended from the very first to break the royal power on Ithaca must therefore be rejected. In fact, the vast majority of the Suitors have no political ambitions whatsoever, while the one who does is eager not to destroy the kingship, but to claim it.

[51] Morris (1986), esp. 86–91. For "particularly illuminating" examples of such tendencies in oral poetry, Morris 87, cites the discussion of Goody and Watt (1963) 308–9, of the Tiv of Nigeria and the Gonja of Ghana. In neither case, however, is either oral poetry or the sort of deep cultural structures Morris is discussing in Homer in question. Instead, Goody and Watt cite the Tiv in connection with ancestor-lists, whose details changed over time along with the contemporary political situation, while their point with the Gonja is simply that the number of sons assigned the state's founder by storytellers varied from seven to five. In addition, Goody and Watt specifically state their belief that oral traditions can be very conservative if mnemonic devices (such as formular poetry) are available, and cite as a specific example of this the Homeric poems. Nor (*pace* Morris 87) does Hoekstra (1981) 87–9, baldly suggest that "Greek oral poets . . . either forc[ed] the past to fit the needs of the present or else reject[ed] outmoded formulae and elements of plot." In fact, Hoekstra makes no reference to "elements of plot" and is explicit about the fact that some incomprehensible phrases were preserved specifically because of the formular nature of Homeric poetry.

their audience, he insists, and what we have in the *Odyssey* must therefore be a reasonably accurate picture of Greek society in the late 8th century B.C.E. In fact, stories about the legendary past are by definition produced not *ex nihilo* but by the narrator's constant reference to and embroidery upon a world about which he and his audience already feel they know a great deal. As a result, there may be standard and important details of the structure of that world upon which everyone would agree (and in fact insist), but which do not reflect contemporary political or social reality in a straightforward or simple way, and which are simultaneously unlikely to be altered or updated by individual storytellers, who see in them a basic guarantee of their own credibility.[52] Although a story must bear some relation to or comment in some way upon the life of its audience if it is to be found interesting or important, therefore, the nature of that relationship or comment can be highly nuanced and complex, and no particular detail in the narrative need conform on a surface level to the audience's real day-to-day experience.[53] If firm external evidence to identify and control the 'epic distance' Homer regularly establishes between his own world and that of his characters is lacking, therefore, it can be extremely difficult to determine what in the text

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[52] *Pace* Morris (1986) 88–9, who consistently confuses believability with fidelity to the audience's own immediate experience. Morris 96, offers as an apparent counter-example to his thesis Radin (1949) 74–5, who argues that the Winnebago tale of 'How an Orphan Restored the Chief's Daughter to Life' depicts a society radically different from that of its narrators in the 20th century and is thus probably an historical memory of some sort. Morris' response is to claim that "this has since been shown not to be the case" by Lévi-Strauss (1960) 351–62. In fact, Lévi-Strauss 355–6, explicitly sets historical argument aside and tries instead to demonstrate that the "logical" structure of Radin's story reflects real Winnebago concerns and beliefs by presenting "the pattern of a non-existent society"; this is not to be confused with a direct reflection of contemporary social structures of the sort Morris posits for Homer. In addition, Radin 75, argues on the basis of extensive field-work among the Winnebago that this story is not an odd and isolated instance, but only one of a number of myths which seem to preserve recollections of a consistent non-contemporary culture, a problem Morris does not address or even acknowledge, but which goes to the heart of his thesis. It is nonetheless intriguing to observe that the two general characteristics of the 'old world' which Radin notes, the existence of chiefs or nobles, on the one hand, and of powerful women and perhaps matrilineal descent structures, on the other, are reminiscent of the heroic society imagined in the *Odyssey*, which in turn might be taken to suggest that these stories reflect common social or psychological impulses rather than an old and otherwise unknown stage of Winnebago (or Greek) history.

[53] Rose (1975) 131–2, offers a useful comparison to modern Westerns, which have little to do with the day-to-day experience of their audiences but seem to strike deep social and personal chords nonetheless.

is of solid historical value and what is not.[54] Were the *Iliad* our only source for the military tactics of the late Dark Ages, after all, we would automatically (and inaccurately) assume that chariots and bronze weapons were the norm then, and similar difficulties affect our understanding of larger questions of social organization, for which the outside sources are considerably less substantial and unambiguous.[55] It is entirely possible that a political system of the sort taken for granted in the *Odyssey* emerged in at least some parts of Greece during the Dark Ages and even persisted here and there into the Geometric period, and that this image was then projected back upon the heroic world.[56] Given the formular nature of Homeric poetry, which allowed (but did not require) ideas and images to be preserved more or less indefinitely over time, as well as the conservatism inherent in a storytelling style grounded in a traditional imaginary world maintained by audience consensus, however, it is equally possible that the poem recalls some earlier historical period or perhaps several run together and confounded.[57] Indeed, one cannot rule out the possibility that significant aspects of the system of government implied in the *Odyssey* are simply a collective fantasy, developed in response to shared conflicts and problems which may have been fundamentally non-political in nature. As a result, the historical questions the Homeric text would seem to pose about the state of affairs in real 8th century B.C.E. Greek-speaking communities remain unanswerable. The way in which the poem deals with problems of social authority and power,

[54] The distinction between "total situations," which have some "external visual referent" and in reference to which a poet can allegedly contradict everyday reality, and merely "auditory information," which has no such possibilities, offered by Morris (1986) 89–90, in an effort to resolve this conundrum, is arbitrary and unhelpful, as his own examples show. If a poet and his audience know of grain, oil, palaces and local 'big men' or nobles, after all, why should they not be able to imagine something approximating a Mycenean redistributive system if it is described to them?

[55] Cf. Finley (1978) 148–50, who sums up the historical question by noting that the Homeric formular system had "the necessary flexibility for both moving the substance along with changes in the world itself and, at the same time, restraining it from excessive contemporaneity." Morris (1986) emphasizes the first half of this formulation at the expense of the second.

[56] This is basically the thesis of Donlan (1985) 303–6. Drews (1983), esp. 10–36, argues strongly against the idea and effectively demolishes the hypothesis of Thomas (1966a), although even he concedes (esp. 84) that various *ethne* in the Peloponnese probably had kings. Morris (1986) 98–9, cites Drews' work approvingly, but after conceding the case is overstated, fails to deal with the devastating implications of the existence of an ahistorical hereditary kingship in the *Odyssey* for his own arguments.

[57] The classic statement of this position is Snodgrass (1974) 114–25.

on the other hand, is extremely revealing of its larger concerns and purposes.

If there is a political tendency apparent in the *Odyssey*, it is certainly in favor of government by a single dominant individual. The Ithacan δῆμος has considerable power and autonomy and Homer's story as a whole displays a moderate amount of sympathy for the economically and socially downtrodden.[58] Odysseus' horrible revenge and the suffering which accompanies it are due precisely to the failure of the local people to stand up to the Suitors earlier, despite their own superiority in numbers (ii.229–41; cf. xxiv.454–60), however, as well as to their apparent lack of self-respect, piety and gratitude for how they have been treated in the past (esp. ii.64–72).[59] Although there is no sense in the text that the Ithacans are unusually evil people, therefore, they are patently incompetent to manage their own affairs and need someone to moderate their wild and sometimes inappropriate impulses (xvi.424–30; xxiv.463–6).[60] As for the poem's aristocrats, some γέροντες are shown in a positive light (e.g. ii.157–76, 224–41; vii.155–66; xi.342–6; xxiv.451–62), but only in their capacity as the king's close companions and supporters (e.g. vii.161; xi.346), who in and of themselves accomplish nothing (esp. ii.224–59; xxiv.461–6). The villainous Suitors and their families, meanwhile, are also the very cream of local society (e.g. i.245–8; ii.50–1; xxiv.110, 429), and there can thus be no question of simple-minded propaganda in favor of the aristocracy as a whole here.

[58] Cf. Donlan (1973); Rose (1975) 141–9. Rose somewhat overstates his case, for were Homer's point in bringing his hero back disguised as a beggar really to display his solidarity with the starving Hesiodic masses (cf. xi.489–90), it is difficult to understand why he allows the old man to identify himself as the ruined son of a wealthy nobleman (e.g. xiv.199–206), and while the Suitors certainly come across very badly in the scene with Iros (esp. xviii.110–6; cf. Rose 144), the beggar himself is also a thoroughly unsympathetic character (esp. xviii.1–31). Nor is the fact that the Suitors seem to spend all day feasting in itself a negative comment on their character (*pace* Rose 137–8), for this is merely the Homeric image of perfect human felicity (e.g. ix.5–11). Their real crime is that they are eating one man's goods rather than taking turns from house to house (i.374–80; ii.138–45).

[59] That the Ithacans as a group are intimidated by the Suitors may well be the case (esp. ii.243–58) but is beside the point, for those in the *Odyssey* who stand up for what is right and decent always win, regardless of the apparent odds against them; cf. xvi.106–11; xx.315–9.

[60] The fact that the Phaeacian δῆμος is less outspoken than its Ithacan counterpart is thus entirely to its credit; cf. Carlier (1984) 205. Similar criticisms can be made of Odysseus' crew, whose story anticipates that of his people although in more summary and brutal terms; see Chapter 3.

Although Odysseus was a good and gentle ruler in the past (esp. ii.46–7, 233–4; iv.693; v.11–2) and his second return will inaugurate an age of blessedness for his people (xi.136–7 = xxiii.283–4), finally, even Penelope admits he is an exception to the rule, which is that kings are routinely harsh, overbearing and arbitrary in their treatment of other men (iv.690–2).[61]

It is thus extremely difficult to isolate a single obvious and consistent political point of view in the *Odyssey*. Instead, its hero is an almost unique individual rather than an embodiment of a particular class or group, and his great accomplishment is to return unexpectedly to set society aright, albeit in a horrifyingly violent fashion. He is thus in many ways like the archetypal father discussed in the previous chapter, who comes back to his house late in the day to restore order there or be overthrown. The father always leaves again, however, and so too the exceptionally good βασιλεύς and all he represents remain remarkably shadowy things in the *Odyssey*'s most basic narrative here-and-now. Individual men rule with extraordinary power and authority in distant, slightly fantastic places such as Sparta and the land of the Phaeacians. Not only is Odysseus considerably less wealthy than Alkinoos and Menelaos, and his people more independent and unruly than theirs appear to be, however, but his presence on his island in the second half of the poem is an altogether exceptional thing. He has been gone for close to twenty years and will soon leave again (esp. xxiii.248–50, 267–72), and when he is in his palace he is generally in disguise and unrecognized. While he should (and allegedly someday will) remain on Ithaca permanently, and while men much like him are currently ruling in other (admittedly inaccessible) places, therefore, the *Odyssey* admits, for the moment he is missing and painfully awaited, be it for the first or second time. What we have in Homer's story of Odysseus' return, that is to say, is in the first instance not a coherent source for early constitutional theory, but a salvation myth. Once long ago in the past (within the poem, the specifically Ithacan past, but in a larger context, the past generally), the *Odyssey* insists, there was a benevolent order to

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[61] The situation is thus once again more complicated than Morris (1986) 122–4, makes it out to be by arguing that the Homeric poems must have been transcribed at the direction of a king who saw in them ideological support for his own position. Note in particular that the great king Agamemnon in the *Iliad* cuts so poor a figure that is difficult to imagine anyone wishing to be identified with him; cf. the insightful comments of Carlier (1984) 195–204.

life, which no longer prevails. Once the ἄναξ was present and all was well. Now the world is in a shambles: might makes right; beggars and other wanderers are abused; the good and honest are weak or ignored or both; the wicked prosper. By and large, this is the same decaying 'Iron Age' society described in *Works and Days* 180–201.[62] Unlike Hesiod, however, Homer corrects this general social and political disaster by bringing Odysseus (whatever the historical roots of the office he occupies) back to Ithaca. Now abuses of hospitality are avenged, even when directed at the most miserable and apparently defenseless of victims; now those who remain steadfastly loyal in an impossible situation are proved not fools but clearsighted, while those who have adapted themselves to changing circumstances are punished for what is abruptly characterized as their treachery; now widows see their vanished husbands return, orphans are ensured their inheritance, and the proud and overbearing are not merely humbled and forced to pay compensation for their crimes, but butchered *en masse*; now beggars turn out, contrary to all expectation, to be kings. In short, the *Odyssey* is a less than satisfactory document for Dark Age political history because it is interested in such imagery primarily as a means to gain access to larger social and intellectual concerns. Needless to say, a perception of disorder and a disintegrating human world is compatible with almost any sort of formal social arrangement, including our own. What the story of Odysseus' return ultimately points to most emphatically, therefore, is a general human experience of loss and disorientation and an admittedly temporary solution to it. One significant difference between Ithaca and Scheria (where all is seemingly well) is that the Phaeacians are in much closer contact with the gods (esp. vii.201–5), while Hesiod associates the ability of the βασιλεύς to put a stop to human troubles closely with the work of poets (*Th.* 75–103). I accordingly turn now to the theodicy of Homer's story and so to its conception of its own power and purposes in the world.

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[62] On the connections between Hesiod's world and the *Odyssey*, cf. Rose (1975) 142–5, who dwells in particular on the theme of hunger as that which drives men to action.

CHAPTER TEN

THE RETURN OF THE GOD

As the prologue to the *Odyssey* begins, Zeus makes a short but powerful speech about the house of Pelops and the origin of mortal troubles. Although men routinely blame the gods for their misfortunes, he insists, they get more than their share through their reckless folly (σφῇσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν i.32–4). Thus Aigisthos courted Klytemestra and murdered her husband upon his homecoming, 'although he knew it was steep death,' and paid for that decision with his life (i.35–43). These remarks echo Homer's claim a few verses earlier that Odysseus' companions died as a result of their own outrageous conduct (αὐτῶν . . . σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν) when they ate the cattle of the Sun (i.6–9), and are obviously in some sense programmatic. Despite that fact, the theology of the *Odyssey* has been a matter of considerable dispute in recent years, and Fenik in particular has argued that the ideas Zeus articulates in Book i do not cohere intellectually with much of the rest of the poem.[1] As I will argue in detail below, that is not the case. Instead, Homer's tale represents a careful and consistent meditation on the origin of human troubles and the problem of how we are to live in an apparently chaotic and arbitrary world, from which not only the father and the king are missing, but the gods as well. That meditation offers in addition an important and incisive comment on the nature of storytelling generally and of this story in particular. I accordingly begin with Fenik and thus the prologue and its relationship to the twin wraths of Poseidon and the Sun. I conclude with a series of more general remarks about the function and significance of κλέος in Homer's time and in our own.

Fenik's argument for theological incoherence in the *Odyssey* proceeds more or less as follows.[2] In the prologue, Zeus' story of Aigisthos

[1] Fenik (1974) 208–30. Fenik's (essentially unitarian) position is both a response to and a further development of arguments put forward by analytic critics such as Schadewaldt (1960). Clay (1983) 213–39, seconds many of Fenik's specific positions although not his larger interpretation; I respond to her views in detail below.

[2] Fenik (1974), esp. 209–16; page-number references for specific quotations are included in the body of the text.

makes the larger point that while men often come to grief as a result of their own actions, this is despite the best efforts of the gods, who try to "warn them off" (209), as Zeus did in this instance by sending Hermes to Mycenae (i.37–43). The Olympians are thus both essentially just and aggressively involved in saving men from bad behavior and its consequences, and Zeus' denunciation of human tendencies must accordingly refer to individuals "of a genuine and consistent criminal character" (211), who are warned in advance against specific actions but carry them out anyway and thus deserve whatever punishment they get.[3] This is Homer's own theology and the intended larger point of the poem, Fenik argues, and has obvious implications for the story of the Suitors. The wraths of Poseidon and Helios, however, do not conform to it. Odysseus is admittedly mistaken to ignore the advice of his men and remain in Polyphemos' cave (ix.224–9), and his impulsive boast as he is escaping back to Goat Island (ix.502–5) is a serious error of judgment. All the same, neither act makes him guilty in the same way as Aigisthos, who walked open-eyed into crime. Indeed, the blinding of the Kyklops (unlike the murder of Agamemnon) is a simple act of self-defense, "justified in terms of Homeric or any other morality" (210), whereas the wrath of Poseidon which results from it is a brutal and instinctive response to a personal affront and has nothing at all to do with abstract considerations of justice. The entire incident thus fails to conform to the theodicy spelled out in Book i, which centers on pro-actively just gods and utterly depraved mortals.[4] So too in the case of the Cattle of the Sun, Fenik argues that the question of moral responsibility is blurred from the very first by the fact that Odysseus does not tell his men precisely why they should not land on Thrinakia (xii.271–6). They for their part, meanwhile, are driven to ignore his unconvincing protests (xii.276–94) by unexceptional, easily understood motives, including "standard Homeric nautical practice, according to which one *never* sails at night" (213; emphasis in the original). Once ashore, the hero and his men are trapped by hostile winds sent by Zeus (xii.313–5, 325–6) and held captive until their supplies run out and hunger starts to pinch (xii.329–32). The decision to kill Helios' cows

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[3] Cf. Lloyd-Jones (1971) 28–30. On Zeus' prologue-speech, cf. Rüter (1969) 64–82.

[4] Clay (1983) 229–30, essentially seconds Fenik's argument; cf. Adkins (1960) 62–3.

(xii.339–52) is accordingly "a desperate act of self-preservation" (213), which occurs only after the gods have put Odysseus to sleep as he is praying for deliverance (xii.333–8), and it is worth noting that the men commit their crime (if that is what it is) in as pious a fashion as possible, doing their best to conform to proper sacrificial ritual despite their utter poverty (xii.356–63). Although they break the oath they made (xii.298–303) and are "in this sense, unequivocably guilty," therefore, they are responsible for what they do only "in the same way one is bound by a contract he has signed without understanding it" (214). Despite all these apparently mitigating factors, Helios forces Zeus to destroy them (xii.374–88, 403–19), and the moral structure of this story as well is thus incompatible with the theodicy spelled out in the prologue: not only are the companions (unlike Aigisthos) given inadequate warning of the dangers they face on Thrinakia, but in the end they are not protected (contrast i.37–9) but actively plotted against by fundamentally malicious divinities.[5] "The real problem," Fenik concludes, "is that the theology of the Odyssey seems inconsistent, that older and newer levels of thought sit uncomfortably side by side, that two of the poem's most important episodes fail to correspond with its most important moral guidelines as exemplified by the suitors and as explained by Zeus" (216). These would be extremely important conclusions, did the evidence support them. It does not, and the problems begin with Fenik's reading of the prologue.

Although Fenik insists that in his initial remarks in Book i Zeus is speaking only of men whose manners and behavior are consistently and almost incomprehensibly criminal, first of all, this is precisely what the text does not say. Zeus is mulling over the behavior of Aigisthos in particular (i.29), but when he begins to speak aloud, uses him only as a specific example (ὡς καὶ νῦν i.35) of mortal behavior generally (i.33–4). This is how human beings act, he says, and there is no suggestion that the characterization he offers is restricted to a few reprobates among them.[6] Nor is Aigisthos presented as an example of persistent, ingrained depravity following its wonted course, as the poet's use of the epithet ἀμύμονος at i.29 makes clear; this is an otherwise 'faultless' man who made one

[5] Thus also Clay (1983) 230.
[6] Note βροτοί rather than the metrically equivalent κακοί in i.32.

terribly bad mistake.[7] Precisely contrary to Fenik's thesis, therefore, Zeus is discussing not the behavior of a small group of criminally-inclined individuals, but that of mortals as a class, including some of the very best among them. Nor is it apparent that in the specific discussion of Aigisthos' choice which follows (esp. i.35–42) Zeus is concerned to portray the gods as consistently determined to turn men away from crime. He does note that Hermes' intentions with his mission were entirely positive (ἀγαθὰ φρονέων i.43), which is to say once again that the Olympians are not consistently malevolent, regardless of what human beings think (cf. i.32–3). At the same time, however, he pays no attention to the motivations of the gods in sending their messenger (n.b. i.37–8 εἴπομεν ἡμεῖς,/ Ἑρμείαν πέμψαντες), which ought to be to the fore if Fenik's reading of the passage is correct, but instead lays overwhelming emphasis on the fact that Aigisthos made the choice to seduce Klytemestra and murder Agamemnon on his own and under no external compulsion (esp. i.42–3). This is ἀτασθαλίαι (i.33–7): freely engaging in what one knows is unacceptable behavior out of a foolish confidence that one will not be forced to pay the established price for it (esp. xviii.130–40; xxii.35–47; xxiv.458–60), and Zeus' point is that no-one else can be held responsible for what this human being did and thus for what he suffered.[8] Aigisthos' folly is underlined by the fact that he was specifically informed in advance of what the consequences of seducing Klytemestra and killing Agamemnon would be (esp. i.37–41), but neither the impropriety of adultery and murder nor the likelihood that vengeance would be taken for them could have been a real surprise to him, and divine intervention is not the point at issue here in any case.[9] Instead, Zeus'

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[7] On ἀμύμων here, see Parry (1973), esp. 156–9, with the response of Combellack (1977); (1982) 361–8. Parry argues that the root-meaning of the word is probably something like the English 'handsome,' but concedes that its implications expanded over time and notes that in connection "with characters and themes which may plausibly be assigned to the final composer of the *Odyssey*" it seems to have taken on a larger sense of "intelligence, gentleness, justice, truthfulness and fear of the gods" (109–13, 158). Responsibility for the prologue must certainly be assigned to Homer himself, so while Zeus' Aigisthos may indeed be 'handsome' (thus Parry 123–4), at i.29 the word undoubtedly has its fuller, later sense as well. *Pace* Combellack (1982), however, Homer nowhere offers vengeance for Thyestes as a justification for the murder of Agamemnon.

[8] On ἀτασθαλίαι and its cognates, see *LfgrE* 1483–7. Behavior of this sort properly evokes νέμεσις (xxi.146–7) and bespeaks a lack of αἰδώς (xx.169–71) and thus of social intelligence (viii.166, 174–7); see Chapter 1.

[9] On Hermes' mission and its limited theological significance, cf. Jaeger

attention is firmly fixed on the fact that human beings routinely get extra troubles for themselves and then ignore or deny that fact, holding the gods responsible for everything which happens to them (i.32–4).

In the prologue to the *Odyssey*, therefore, Zeus does not argue that he and his fellow divinities are consistently and benevolently active in the world, a position which would indeed be incompatible with much of the rest of Homer's story, but only expresses his annoyance at the fact that they are blamed for all mortal troubles, including those they do not cause. That the Olympians regularly attempt to save men from disaster is neither asserted nor implied. Nor is Zeus talking about a very few, very wicked individuals; instead, these are utterly typical patterns of human behavior. It accordingly comes as no surprise that they are also apparent in what goes on in the land of the Kyklopes and on Thrinakia, once those stories too are rightly understood.

As Odysseus' description of the situation on Goat Island makes quite clear, first of all, he and his men have everything they could possibly need there: a safe harbor (ix.136–9) and ample supplies of water (ix.140–1), meat (ix.154–62) and wine (ix.162–5).[10] His decision to visit Polyphemos is thus driven by no external compulsion whatsoever and is even made (at least as he tells the tale) despite a foreboding that he may not receive a hospitable reception (ix.213–5; cf. ix.189). Nor does anything require Odysseus to remain in the cave when he first arrives there (cf. ix.216–7), and he must in fact reject his companions' suggestion that they steal what they can and flee (ix.224–8). This as well, he later admits, was a miscalculation (ix.228–30), and the error is compounded by his decision to enter the monster's house uninvited and await him there (ix.231–3). By beginning his analysis of the theological implications of Book ix only after the hero is trapped within the Kyklops' cave and by focussing on what he does at that point, therefore, Fenik obscures the incident's real connections to Zeus' prologue-speech, for the fact of the matter is that Odysseus gets trouble for himself by a series of unfortunate

(1960) 321–2, = (1966) 83–4. For the concession apparently implicit in i.33–4, see below.

[10] Indeed, Goat Island may have been added to the traditional story of the encounter with the man-eating ogre to stress that Odysseus' decision to visit the Kyklopes is a free one; cf. Glenn (1971) 149–50. Fenik (1974) 210–1, recognizes the presence here of the motif of "wise advice disregarded," but insists this is not the point of the story; in that case, one wonders why these details were introduced at all.

and essentially thoughtless choices (cf. i.33–4).[11] So too the hero's decision to secure his own κλέος by identifying himself by name to Polyphemos (ix.502–5), which leads directly to Poseidon's wrath (ix.526–36) and thus to many years of exile (esp. i.68–75), is taken freely in the face of reasonable advice to the contrary (ix.494–500). Nor, on the other hand, is there anything odd or incomprehensible about the sea-god's anger, for his son has been attacked and blinded, and whatever the other rights and wrongs of the situation, his desire for revenge is no more or less just than that of Orestes for his father (i.40–1).[12] The bottom line, therefore, is that Odysseus brings his own troubles upon himself in precisely the manner Zeus describes in his speech in Book i.[13] Similar points can be made in connection with the incident involving the Cattle of the Sun (xii.260–419).

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[11] Cf. x.455–7, where Eurylochos refers to the entire expedition to the land of the Kyklopes as evidence of the 'reckless folly' (ἀτασθαλίῃσιν) of the 'rash Odysseus.'

[12] Thus not even Athena ever criticizes Poseidon's wrath (cf. vi.328–31; xiii.339–43), although she does work to mitigate its consequences (esp. i.48–87). *Pace* Fenik (1974) 211, Zeus offers no hint that the gods feel one way or another about Orestes' vengeance; it is simply an inevitable consequence of one particular course of action, a fact Aigisthos would be well-advised to keep in mind (i.37–41).

[13] Friedrich (1991) 16–28, follows Fenik in arguing that Poseidon's wrath is unjust, but attempts to reconcile what he takes to be the prologue-theology with the action in Book ix by seizing on Odysseus' report that Zeus rejected his sacrifice of a ram after his escape because he was already angry with him and plotting the destruction of his ship and companions (ix.550–5). There is good reason for this wrath, Friedrich argues, for Odysseus is twice guilty of hybris, first for claiming the divine prerogative to judge the behavior of the Kyklopes (ix.174–6) and then for insisting Poseidon cannot heal Polyphemos' eye (ix.523–5). While Poseidon's anger may be unjust, therefore, that of Zeus is not, and the king of the gods uses his brother's unfortunate behavior for his own purposes, as a means of taming Odysseus; the story as a whole thus hangs together theologically, and Poseidon's primeval bitterness is made to serve a higher end. While Odysseus' insistence that Poseidon will not be able to heal Polyphemos' eye (for which, see Combellack [1981]) does represent a largely "gratuitous insult" to the sea-god (Friedrich 23) and is perhaps a foolish thing to say, however, the hero is correct. Poseidon's power to protect his mortal favorites is limited (esp. xii.106–7) and despite his son's pathetic confidence in him (ix.520–1), he clearly never heals him, but only batters Odysseus about. While the hero's remark may be injudicious, therefore, it is scarcely "impious" and Zeus has no reason to punish him for it. Nor can Odysseus' willingness to assess the character of the Kyklopes when he visits their land (ix.174–6) be interpreted as a culpable arrogation of divine privileges, for how strangers and guests are treated in a place is part of the natural content of κλέος and something about which any sensible host worries (esp. xiv.402–5; xviii.215–25; xix.325–34). In fact, as Friedrich himself argues at (1987) 387, it is a fundamental mistake to treat the routinely ill-informed assertions of Homer's mortal characters about the behavior or motivations of the gods as statements of narrative fact (cf. Jörgensen [1904], esp. 363–7). Except in very rare instances (cf. xii.389–90), men do not know what the gods are doing or

Had Homer (or the earlier poet from whom, Fenik [218–9] suspects, he borrowed this incident) wished to portray Odysseus and his men as simple victims of divine malevolence, brought to Thrinakia against their will and cruelly and arbitrarily destroyed there, he could have had their boat run unexpectedly up against the shore, as it does on Goat Island (ix.142–8), and immediately allowed unfavorable winds to detain them. Instead, the ship pauses off the coast and the crew debate very deliberately about whether or not to land (xii.264–303), so that whatever follows must be understood as in the first instance the result of their own free decision. Although Fenik denies this, moreover, Odysseus tells his men precisely why they should not land on the island: 'for [Kirke and Tiresias] repeatedly said that terrible trouble is there for us' (xii.275). That he does not go into detail about the cattle they will encounter should they disregard his advice is irrelevant; this is a pointed warning, backed by two excellent authorities as well as the word of their leader, and deserves respect.[14] Nor can the eagerness of the crew to avoid spending the night at sea be justified by reference to iron-clad rules of Homeric sailing, as Fenik would have it, for virtually every other important voyage in the *Odyssey* is in fact made by night (ii.388–iii.5; xiii.31–125; xv.284–300, 471–5) and sailing twenty-four hours a day seems to be normal and unexceptional practice (e.g. iii.180–3; ix.142–3; x.28; xv.476; cf. xiv.344–57; xvi.366–70).[15] The initial decision to put in to Thrinakia is thus a textbook example of human folly and requires that the men be assigned at least some basic degree of responsibility for what happens to them there. Nor are they innocent victims in the slaughter of the cows which follows, despite Fenik's

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intend, and while the story Odysseus offers the Phaeacians many years later may reflect his knowledge of what Zeus eventually did to his men and his ship (xii.374–88, 403–19), it need not be integrated at face-value into the overarching theological structure of the poem, except as further evidence of the unfortunate tendencies to which Zeus refers at i.32–3.

[14] *Pace* Fenik (1974) 212, who insists that Aigisthos and the Suitors are fundamentally unlike Odysseus' crew in that they "receive clear warning in advance from persons they have good reason to listen to." *Pace* Fenik (1974) 213, moreover, the fact that the sailors apparently feel confidence in their reasons for wanting to land is of no significance in evaluating their decision; doubtless Aigisthos felt the same about seducing Klytemestra, and Odysseus' desire for gifts from the Kyklopes is also obviously sincere, if foolish in retrospect.

[15] Schadewalt (1960) 865, refers simply to what he alleges were real contemporary fears about nighttime sailing, which does not contradict the text but is still irrelevant to making sense of characters who clearly feel no such anxieties.

efforts to excuse them. Odysseus reports that Zeus rouses up a storm (xii.313–5) which turns into a month-long wind bearing directly back to Skylla and Charybdis (xii.325–6), and maintains the gods put him to sleep at a crucial moment (xii.333–8; cf. xii.370–3), creating an occasion for his men to kill the cattle of the Sun (xii.339–69). Even if all this is true, however, the crew are no more required to kill Helios' cows because they are given the opportunity than Aigisthos was compelled to seduce Klytemestra because her husband was absent at Troy or Odysseus was forced to visit the Kyklopes because he heard the sound of their animals and saw the smoke of their fires (ix.166–7). Nor are the men actually starving yet, for they still have fish and birds to hunt (xii.329–32), and what they face is accordingly not imminent death, but only the prospect of being slowly worn down by hunger over time (esp. xii.351).[16] Once again, however, they hold a meeting and determine what to do in full awareness of the potential consequences of their decision (esp. xii.348–52), and the outwardly pious manner in which they butcher the cattle (xii.356–63) and their promise to dedicate a temple to Helios if they ever return home (xii.345–7) are thus as pointless and profitless as the Suitors' final desperate offer to repay Odysseus for the animals they have eaten (xxii.55–67) or Aigisthos' dedications to the gods in Mycenae after he takes up with Klytemestra (iii.273–5).[17] Had they held out for only one week more (cf. xii.399–400), they might have made their way back to Ithaca alive (cf. xi.110–1; xii.137–8). Instead, they break their oath, whose importance and implications their willingness to restrain themselves up to this point (xii.327–32) proves they understand, and consciously offend the Sun, who takes a entirely understandable vengeance on them as a result. As the poet says in his proem, therefore, 'they perished by their own reckless folly' (i.7–9).[18]

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[16] Friedrich (1987a) 391; cf. Segal (1992) 508. Naturally Eurylochos presents the situation in the starkest terms possible in order to persuade his companions to do what he suggests (xii.340–2), but this is at least to some extent rhetorical posturing.

[17] *Pace* Fenik (1974) 213. Note that the men go on butchering cows for six more days and always choose the best (xii.397–8; cf. xii.353), which is evidence not of desperate hunger, but of thoughtless greed and folly.

[18] Cf. Suerbaum (1968) 160–1. The analogy offered by Fenik (1974) 214, of a contract a man signs but does not understand is thus particularly inapt. The men understand quite well what it is to which they are swearing, but do not expect their words to have any consequences, since they intend to leave Thrinakia the next day. Once they have made the oath, however, they cannot claim not to be bound by it when things do not work out as expected. For the connections between the Suitors and Odysseus' crew, cf. most recently Nagler (1990) 336–46.

Fenik's arguments for theological contradictions within the text of the *Odyssey* thus crumble away rapidly upon closer inspection, for Homer's stories show over and over again how human beings bring troubles upon themselves by means of their own thoughtless actions, precisely as Zeus says in the prologue. Aigisthos chooses to seduce Klytemestra and murder Agamemnon, and dies at the hands of Orestes as a result; Odysseus visits the land of the Kyklopes without any need to do so and despite his own forebodings, enters Polyphemos' cave in defiance of all standards of decent behavior and in the face of good advice to the contrary, and gives the monster he has just outraged his name, for all of which he is driven into exile from Ithaca for many years; the crew make a deliberate and unnecessary decision to land on what they know is a dangerous island and then go on to butcher the cattle they find there, despite having sworn not to do so, and thus become the object of a vengeful divine wrath.[19] So too the Suitors deliberately occupy Odysseus' house, outrage his servants, abuse his guests, court his wife and plot against his son. This is once again precisely ἀτασθαλίαι (xvi.86; xxii.313–7; xxiii.65–7; cf. iii.205–7; xvi.93–4; xvii.587–8; xx.369–70; xxi.146–7; xxiv.282) and their failure to anticipate the hero's return is entirely beside the point; they know they are acting badly, but do not expect to have to pay for it (ii.244–51), and as a result they cannot complain of injustice or entrapment when finally called to account for what they have done (esp. xxii.45–7, 54–9). Nor does the fact that their conduct is even more outrageous than that of Odysseus and his men suggest that the punishment of the latter is somehow out of all proportion to their actions.[20] Instead, the point of the entire complex of stories is precisely the opposite: if Odysseus and his companions suffer so much for relatively modest acts of folly, *a fortiore* the Suitors, who are not driven by nagging hunger to eat the king's cattle or threatened in any immediate way with death at the hands of his son, must pay with their lives for their misbehavior.

[19] Note also what happens to the Phaeacians, who ignore Nausithoos' prophecy about the danger of providing free passage to everyone who visits them (viii.564–71) and seem likely to be destroyed as a result (xiii.125–87), and to Odysseus' men, who ignore his urgent pleading to leave the land of the Kikonians and lose six men out of every ship as a result (ix.43–6, 60–1). Compare Eupeithes' disregard for Halitherses' warning about getting a 'self-chosen trouble' (xxiv.462, 469–71), as a result of which he is killed (xxiv.523–5), and the way in which Iros brings pain upon himself (xviii.73–4) by ignoring the warning offered by the Stranger (xviii.15–24).

[20] *Pace* Fenik (1974) 221.

The *Odyssey* is thus above all else a story of the troubles human beings bring upon themselves, and Homer seems to make a consistent effort to set other sorts of situations to one side from the very first. In his opening speech, Zeus never denies outright that the gods cause men suffering, but only says that whatever comes to them 'beyond their portion' (ὑπὲρ μόρον) is their fault (i.33–4). Although the idea that the Olympians send other, arbitrary griefs lurks in the background here, however, it is left conspicuously undeveloped.[21] Nor is this ellipsis to be explained by suggesting that the king of the gods is merely making the best of a bad rhetorical situation, obscuring the fact that he and his fellow divinities cause men some of their troubles because it would be impolitic to admit that openly.[22] Were Zeus making a public response to mortal complaints or even aware of speaking the prologue to a Homeric epic, verbal maneuvering of this sort would perhaps be appropriate. As it is, however, he is thinking aloud in the privacy of his own home and the company of his family, who ought to know the truth of the matter, whatever it is, and had either he or Homer wished to stress that men get their troubles from two sources, only one of which is their own free decisions, that could easily have been said outright here. Instead, Zeus passes over the question of divine responsibility as briefly and allusively as possible, stressing instead the ways in which human beings bring about their own ruin.[23] So too in the particular case of Odysseus, Athena's observation that the hero is to all appearances the most pious of men and thus the least deserving of the troubles which dog him (i.60–2; cf. xix.363–9) is quickly deflated by Zeus, who points out that he is in fact directly responsible for what has happened to him (i.68–75). Although some of Homer's characters do on occasion make assertions about divine irresponsibility and the arbitrary nature of human life (e.g. i.348–9; iv.236–7; vi.188–9; xiv.444–5; xvii.424; xx.201–3), therefore, these remarks must be read with considerable

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[21] *Pace* Fenik (1974) 211, who overreads Zeus' οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοί (more easily taken simply 'they themselves'; cf. i.251; xii.57) at i.33–4.

[22] Clay (1983) 218.

[23] Indeed, by speaking vaguely of a man's 'portion' (μόρος) and thus presumably of fate without specifying what this is or how it is determined, Zeus rather implies that he himself is trapped between destiny on the one hand and human folly on the other. While he may at times intervene in the world (not always too successfully [i.37–43]), therefore, he is emphatically not responsible for much of what goes on there. On the ambiguous relationship between the Homeric gods and μοῖρα, see Ehnmark (1935) 74–85; Adkins (1960) 17–21.

caution (cf. i.32–3) and are often deeply ironic. Thus when Telemachos says in reference to the 'baneful homecoming of the Achaians' that Zeus gives out good and bad indiscriminately (i.348–9), he misunderstands the situation completely (i.68–75; cf. iii.132–5), while Philoitios' denunciation of the chief god for showing no care for men in general and Odysseus in particular (xx.201–3) is made in the very presence of his master, who has come back to Ithaca under divine escort to take revenge for the wrongs being done him there.[24] At the same time, the cycle of foolish decisions leading up to punishment which Zeus defines in Book i seems frequently to play itself out in the poem on the human plane alone. Thus no god assists Orestes in taking revenge for Agamemnon, or lends aid to the Kikonians against Odysseus' crew, or helps the Kyklops trap and destroy the invaders he finds within his house. Justice does not fail in any of these cases. All the same, it is fundamentally a matter of self-help, and 'folly' seems to consist almost exclusively of miscalculating the capacity of one's enemy to take vengeance for what one does to him or of leaving oneself exposed to his wrath when it could have been evaded. The gods, meanwhile, are surprisingly unconcerned with how mortals treat one another in general, to the extent that even pirates, who make a business of bringing arbitrary troubles to others (cf. iii.72–4; ix.253–5), do not necessarily incur their wrath (xiv.85–8). On the one hand, therefore, Homer excludes the hand of the Olympians from the world in a careful and consistent fashion and focusses his attention instead on the troubles human beings bring themselves and one another, but on the other hand, his *Odyssey* is from first to last a tale of direct divine intervention in the world. This apparent contradiction demands an explanation, and that explanation in turn leads to a series of much larger questions.

Clay explains the occasional willingness of Homeric divinities to intervene in mortal affairs by arguing that, while the gods are fundamentally indifferent to men, they take action from time to time in favor of earthly justice in order that we not grow completely indifferent to them; were that to happen, she suggests, their very existence

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[24] Cf. Eurykleia's similarly ironic remarks at xix.363–9. Fenik (1974) 223–5, examines the same general set of passages but treats them only as further evidence of what he regards as the poem's internal theological diversity. Clay (1983) 221–31, on the other hand, argues that these remarks help establish one of the basic moral themes of the *Odyssey*, which is the need for endurance; see below.

would be threatened.[25] This explanation falters above all else on the fact that the gods in the *Odyssey* do not obviously depend on human recognition or support in any fundamental way. They appreciate and desire sacrifice (e.g. i.22–6, 60–7; iii.430–6; v.100–2) and insist upon the proper performance of ritual (iv.351–3), and for individuals within their circle the disrespect of men who owe them allegiance leads to a humiliating loss of face which must be corrected immediately (esp. xiii.128–58). All the same, nothing suggests the gods would starve without our offerings or fade away into obscurity did we not pay them honor. Instead, they have a secure and comfortable life on Olympos (esp. vi.42–6), and should human beings for some reason begin to ignore them, it is not the immortals who would be poorer as a consequence (cf. iii.48). When they do become involved in the world, in fact, it is not simply to gain our attention, but for the much more specific and selfish reason that their personal favorites or family have been abused, their property attacked or their honors stinted.[26] Thus Poseidon lashes out at Odysseus when he blinds his son Polyphemos (esp. i.68–75), and demands that the Phaeacians be punished because, although they are his own descendents, they have given his bitterest enemy rich gifts and transport home (xiii.128–38), while Helios asks Zeus to destroy the companions when they slaughter the cows in which he takes delight (xii.377–81) and the Olympians in general refuse to allow Menelaos to sail from Egypt after he fails to offer them the proper sacrifices (iv.351–3). In each case, the god defends what is his with all the power at his disposal, and when Odysseus and his men sack the city of the Kikonians, they are accordingly careful to spare and protect Apollo's priest (ix.197–201; contrast I.8–52). In addition to their priests and children, the Olympians have other, more idiosyncratically chosen favorites, whose interests they defend as well. Thus Hera gives her beloved Jason's boat safe transport through the otherwise impassable Symplegades (xii.69–72), while Athena stands beside Odysseus (esp. iii.218–22; xiii.300–7, 314–5; xx.47–8) and ensures that he and his son overcome all odds to destroy their enemies (e.g. xx.49–51). Immediate, reliable divine patronage of this sort is reserved for the very few. All the same, the gods' general tendency toward personal favoritism means that sensible men always curry favor with them when they can in hopes of

[25] Clay (1983) 238–9.
[26] Cf. Ehnmark (1935) 86–93; Adkins (1960) 63–4.

having their backing when trouble comes (e.g. i.60–2; xiv.402–6; xvii.239–43; cf. xiii.347–71), as it inevitably does. Sacrifice and other respectful deeds cannot guarantee the divine goodwill if one has already ruined oneself in some other way (esp. iii.143–7; cf. iii.273–5, 303–8), but they are a potentially useful means of swaying the gods' opinions under other circumstances, and a man is a fool to neglect them.

The readiness of Homer's Olympians to intervene in our world out of self-interest also explains their concern for guest-friendship and supplication, and that in turn has important implications for Zeus' prologue-theodicy and thus the meaning of the *Odyssey* as a whole. Suppliants, strangers and the like are weak and vulnerable almost by definition. The gods do not favor them for that reason, however, but because the institutions upon which they rely are under the direct patronage of Zeus (esp. vii.164–5; ix.269–71; xiv.386–9). Why this is so is never specified and is perhaps a matter of indifference. What matters is that when ξεῖνοι or ἱκέται are mistreated, the Olympians' interests are infringed upon as well and they strike back in what seems to them their own defense.[27] As Zeus argues in Book i and as much of the rest of Homer's story seems designed to make clear, while to the naive or unreflective observer human beings appear to live in a morally chaotic universe and to suffer good or bad at the whim of randomly malevolent divinities (esp. i.32–3; cf. xx.201–3), in fact their own free and foolish decisions are the source of, if not all their troubles, at least all those troubles he and the poet are interested in discussing. When one individual mistreats another who is as strong or stronger than he is himself or who can call someone more powerful to his aid, he can expect to be attacked in turn; thus Aigisthos murders Agamemnon and is punished for this by the dead man's son (i.40–3), the Kikonians summon their more numerous and warlike relatives from inland to repel the raiders who have sacked their city (ix.47–61), and Polyphemos first acts in his own defense and then calls upon his father to take vengeance for him (ix.526–36). Whether or not the aggressor survives will then depend on his own cleverness (cf. ix.413–23) or his ability to offer acceptable

[27] Hence the typical traveller's formulation, which distinguishes men who are 'hybristic and savage and unjust' from 'those who are kind to strangers' and whose disposition is accordingly said to be respectful of the gods (vi.119–21; viii.572–6; ix.174–6).

compensation for what he has done (cf. xii.345–7; xxii.55–9), but in any case, once satisfaction has been given (or refused), neither party is left with much to complain of. The practical moral problem this poses is that a theory of justice based on aggressive self-help or access to powerful allies is irrelevant to situations where the victim is weak or friendless and cannot therefore defend himself. Indeed, if recklessness is defined as a thoughtless disregard of the potential consequences of one's actions, abuse of the powerless would not obviously seem to be irresponsible behavior and the strong would do well to trample down the weak. The Olympians' interest in ξενίη and ἱκεσία eliminates that difficulty, since to prey upon individuals involved in such relationships is to wrong the gods as well and thus to open oneself up to divine wrath. At precisely the point where Zeus' prologue-theodicy seems least capable of ensuring that men treat one another well, that is to say, the gods' concern for their own privileges steps in to guarantee a basic minimum of earthly justice, even if that is not their primary objective.[28] Nor is this aspect of the poem's theology quite as naive as it might at first appear to be. The problem with any theory of justice which relies on divine intervention is that, as anyone who lives in the world is aware, the gods do not regularly and routinely punish transgressions of what are taken to be their laws. Although the majority of Homer's characters believe the Olympians keep some watch on human affairs (e.g. ii.66–7; xiv.81–8; xx.215; xxi.27–8; xxiii.63–7), however, they also recognize that the divine attention is not continuous, so that one can save oneself by giving up foolish behavior before being caught at it (ii.66–71) or appeal to the gods to pay attention to something which they have apparently not noticed yet (ii.143–5). Despite the fact that the Olympians audit human affairs on an occasional basis (xvii.481–7), therefore, men may choose to play the odds, as Antinoos does (xvii.488), and without a doubt one can strike at least 99 beggars out of 100 with impunity (cf. xvii.278–9). When trouble finally comes, however, there is no way to escape it.

The world Homer imagines in the *Odyssey* is thus almost exclusively human, but the linch-pin which holds its intellectual and moral structure together is the certainty that, at least on very rare but also very definite and frightening occasions, the gods will take action in

[28] Cf. Adkins (1960) 65–6, who develops the point in a somewhat different manner.

defense of their own rights and thus incidentally of justice. Odysseus' revenge is in one sense purely human. He is famous throughout the world for treachery and sheer fighting ability (esp. ix.19–20; xvi.241–2; cf. iv.240–89; xxi.91–5) and has in addition a son who can stand by his side or take revenge for him if he is killed (e.g. i.298–302). Although the Suitors know he would be determined to destroy them were he to return (cf. ii.246–51), however, they refuse to take the possibility seriously (ii.157–93), just as they ignore Telemachos' threats and new-found maturity (esp. ii.301–30), foolishly convinced of their invulnerability to damage from any human quarter (ii.243–51), and as a result they are butchered at the end of the story in hand-to-hand combat. At the same time, Odysseus is Athena's personal favorite (esp. iii.218–22; xiii.300–1) and ultimately appears in his halls in the guise of a ragged old beggar (esp. xvii.336–8), who is simultaneously and somewhat incongruously the family's honored guest (e.g. xviii.221–4; xix.253–4). The Suitors for their part, meanwhile, not only abuse the hero and his family, but also make a constant mockery of ἱκεσία and ξενίη, eating and drinking in a house where they are not welcome (e.g. ii.55–79), paying no heed to strangers and guests (esp. xxii.414–5; xxiii.65–6; cf. i.106–20; xx.358–83) and abusing beggars (esp. xvii.458–63; xviii.387–98; xx.296–302). They thus become the objects of divine as well as human wrath and, as Kearns has argued, both forms of revenge find expression in the person of Odysseus, who plays what otherwise seems to be the part of the divinity in a traditional story-pattern by appearing unexpectedly and in disguise among men, enduring their abuse and exacting a sudden and horrible penalty from them (cf. xvii.481–7).[29] The return of the father to his house and of the king to his realm is thus simultaneously and quite concretely the appearance of the gods in the world and, as Laertes observes, the clearest possible proof that they exist (xxiv.351–2).[30]

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[29] Kearns (1982); thus also Müller (1966) 144–5; Murnaghan (1987) 12–3; Reece (1993) 181–7. Burnett (1970) 24–5, offers a careful description of the traditional story-pattern with extensive citation of primary sources. This is in fact precisely what Penelope believes has happened when she first learns of the Suitors' death: 'someone of the gods killed [them], offended by their heart-rending outrage and evil deeds' (xxiii.63–4).

[30] My reading of the poem is thus in many ways radically opposed to that of Winterbottom (1989), who nonetheless brings out some of the real complexity of the problems at issue in it.

Odysseus has been gone from Ithaca for so long that virtually everyone there recognizes he is unlikely to come back, and some of those closest to him express doubts about whether he ever existed at all (xv.267–8; xix.314–5; xxiv.289). When the poem begins, in fact, the hero is trapped in a place which is simultaneously at the very center of the sea (i.50) and the furthest ends of the earth (v.55, 100–2), and has no means of escape from there (iv.558–60; v.15–7). Should he nevertheless somehow make his way home, it seems inevitable that he will be set upon and killed (cf. ii.246–51; xvi.243–57), and in his absence his household and Ithacan society at large have fallen into complete disorder. As for the gods, if they feel any gratitude for the honors Odysseus paid them in the past or any horror at the Suitors' behavior, they show no obvious sign of it (esp. xix.363–9). In short, this is a world of profound and enduring injustice (cf. i.32–3), from which the Olympians seem to have absented themselves completely (cf. iii.218–28) and to whose troubles no solution seems likely or even possible. What sustains those of its inhabitants who have not given in to evil and distinguishes them from their peers is their memory of the past, which is to say of Odysseus, and their hope that it (and he) may someday return, but both memory and hope are fading and time is running out. In one very basic sense, therefore, Homer's story is set in a world a great deal like our own. As Zeus says in the prologue, human life is often troubled and unhappy for one reason or another (i.32–4), but decency and honor do persist. At least as the *Odyssey* formulates the question, however, they do so only because those who practice them believe the current state of affairs is temporary and will someday be corrected. Once that hope is abandoned, the choice is between despair and submission on the one hand, and what had previously seemed to be malicious and cynical behavior, but must now be recognized as realism, on the other; the only other option is to be destroyed (i.251 = xvi.128; cf. Hes. *Op.* 270–3). While one basic message of the *Odyssey* may perhaps be the need to endure, therefore, such endurance makes sense only because at the end of Homer's tale the father and king returns and the gods reverse what had seemed to be their settled policy of malevolent indifference to human behavior (esp. xix.363–9; xx.201–7; cf. i.32–4). Because (and only because) all this is true, there is reason to believe that there is a firm moral logic to things and that human beings can and must take responsiblity for virtually everything which happens to them or which they do to one another

(i.32–43).[31] At the same time, Odysseus' return is a miracle which flies directly in the face of all experience and expectation, for nothing so amazing has ever happened or seems likely to happen in our own world, and that problem has had a decisive effect on the end of Homer's story.

In one sense, the world is set aright at the conclusion of the *Odyssey*, for the father and king returns to his house and the gods break actively and aggressively into human life in defense of their favorites and their own rights. All the same, Odysseus must go off again almost immediately (esp. xxiii.267–81), and when Athena appears in the poem's final lines, she is once more back in disguise (xxiv.546–8; cf. i.103–5). In a second and perhaps even more important sense, therefore, nothing has changed at all, for the reality and power of the Olympians are once more hidden from mortal eyes and Homer's characters are doomed to begin to wait again, still trapped between what was and what will and ought to be.[32] What is different is that they can do so with more confidence now (esp. xxiii.286–7), since if Odysseus has returned once, it is not an unreasonable assumption that he will do so again, and the Olympians have demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt the reality of their oversight of and concern for our affairs. As I argued in detail in Chapter 7, Athena and the poet are best understood as a single figure, half within and half without the narrative, and work together to invent the tale and guide it to its conclusion. So too Odysseus is, by Athena's explicit testimony, her equivalent within the world of men (esp. xiii.296–9), and although he (like and indeed for the benefit of the external audience) is kept ignorant of a great deal (esp. xx.24–54), the plans of the two fall together in the end (esp. xx.392–4) and their revenge is a common one (e.g. xxii.297–309; cf. xiii.372–3). At the high point of the story, finally, Homer suggests a further strong connection, between himself and his hero (cf. xi.367–9; xvii.518–21), by allowing Odysseus to string and sound his bow precisely in the manner of a singer with his lyre (xxi.406–11).[33]

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[31] For the *Odyssey* as a genuinely profound meditation on the human dilemma and an illustration of the much-longed-for triumph of order over disorder, cf. Kitto (1966) 129–33, 140–52.

[32] Cf. xiii.125–87, esp. 181–7, where the story of the Phaeacians is left suspended in a way strikingly reminiscent of Odysseus' own story.

[33] Cf. Stewart (1976) 158–9. Note also that at xxii.240 Athena appears within the poem in the form of a swallow, whose song the bowstring echoes.

Homer, Athena and Odysseus are thus on one important level a single, externally diverse but internally consistent character, 'the author of the action,' and the return of the king and father to Ithaca and the intervention of the gods from which it results and to which it corresponds are in this sense events formally parallel to the singing of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus must leave his house and country a second time in part because that is what the father always does and because the perfectly good, just and legitimate king is inevitably missing from the world, just as Athena in the end conceals her identity from the Ithacans because the gods remain invisible to us as well. All this must also happen, however, because Homer's story, like the various returns it reports and recapitulates, is only a brief interruption in and respite from day-to-day existence, which lumbers on regardless. Like the preliminary return of the king to Ithaca, the *Odyssey* does not obviously and concretely leave us anywhere other than where we began, but is at best a swallow's song (xxi.411; cf. xxii.239–40), the harbinger of spring but not the spring itself.[34] Like Eumaios and Telemachos in particular, but like almost all the other positive characters in the *Odyssey* as well, we exist in what is, to the extent we are conscious of ourselves, a perpetual condition of loss and exile simultaneously from youth and innocence both personal and social and from any absolutely clear and effective standard of authority. Once we lived in our father's house, which was assuredly not as we remember it; once there was a good king and master over us, as there is not now, and hard work and decent behavior were rewarded, as they no longer seem likely to be; once the gods watched over our actions and (much more to the point) those of our peers, and actively defended their own interests and thus ours as well. Something disastrous has happened in the meantime or, put more honestly, we and our world are not what we would have them be. All the same, we know, or think we know, how things once were and so how they should be again, and that vision is preserved specifically in storytelling.

The most basic thesis of the *Odyssey* and the most significant myth which it perpetuates is thus that κλέος bears a significant relationship to the world in which we live. As Aristotle argued many centuries ago, the nature of a true and effective story and the thing which distinguishes it most effectively from ordinary experience is that it has a beginning, a middle and an end, all of which are tightly and

[34] Cf. Losada (1985); Borthwick (1988) 14–6.

logically related to one another, which is to say that it makes sense (*Po.* 1450b27–35; cf. 1449b16–20, 1451a22–30). For us, on the other hand, access to significant existence is no easier than it is for Odysseus on Kalypso's island; real life is an endless, in many ways unsatisfying present, punctuated in an arbitrary and unhelpful manner by birth on one end (cf. i.48–50) and death on the other (cf. i.57–9), and from which there is otherwise no escape (cf. v.15–7). The extraordinary power of the narrator and thus of the hero and god whose existence his own alludes to and guarantees, is to be able to overcome such limitations (cf. i.76–7), which are in another sense what divides Heaven from Earth (cf. i.52–4), where we are forced to live. Despite appearances, the *Odyssey* insists, the world is structured in a coherent way (i.32–43), although that fact normally lies just beyond the edge of our perceptions and our understanding. This is not Ogygia but Ithaca, and we are merely stranded in the middle of a tale, of which we remember the beginning (cf. i.232–3) and whose end we can accordingly imagine (e.g. i.114–7), in part because a rich and revealing version of it has just been told to us (cf. i.298–302). The father, king, and god was once among us and will come again; indeed, he has already returned very briefly as a guarantee of this, leaving us now to wait again. κλέος is thus fundamentally an assertion that there is still room for hope (and fear), and that we can and must continue—or at least begin—to live in the terrible if somehow comforting conviction of the inevitability of judgment upon ourselves and our actions.

APPENDIX A

κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται (IX.413) AND HOMERIC FORMULARITY

As a direct result of the work of Gregory Nagy, κλέος ἄφθιτον (IX.413) has become one of the most famous phrases in all Greek literature.[1] In these words and their apparent Sanskrit counterparts, Nagy and others argue, we have a precious remnant of an old pan-Indo-European heroic poetry and thus potential insight into how pre-Homeric singers thought of themselves and their craft. In an important recent article, Margalit Finkelberg has challenged this view and argued that Achilles' remark in *Iliad* IX is much more likely "an *ad hoc* innovation evoked by its immediate context" than an ancient poetic formula.[2] Anthony Edwards has responded by finding fault with Finkelberg's understanding of the mechanics of Homeric composition and has dismissed her arguments on that account.[3] In the process, he has obscured the real nature of Nagy's claims and thus the importance of Finkelberg's critique. In fact, as she has shown, there is no good reason to believe the phrase κλέος ἄφθιτον tells us anything about a traditional pan-Indo-European poetry.

Finkelberg begins by noting that the fact that the words κλέος ἄφθιτον appear only once in the Homeric corpus means they do not satisfy the basic technical criterion for identifying a formula, which is repetition. As a result, they cannot automatically be assumed to have an archaic character merely on the basis of alleged Vedic parallels. In addition, Finkelberg points out that κλέος ἄφθιτον is not itself a self-contained semantic unit, for in its sole appearance in epic (IX.413) the adjective is predicative rather than attributive ('my glory will be unperishing,' not 'my unperishing glory will exist'). If there is a traditional formula to be recovered here, therefore, it is not κλέος ἄφθιτον but κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται. The latter phrase, however, finds a precise equivalent in κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται, which has the same metrical value,

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1 Nagy (1974), esp. 229–61; summarized in Nagy (1979) 16, 95. For similar, earlier arguments, see Wackernagel (1943); Schmitt (1967) 61–102, esp. 66–7.

2 Finkelberg (1986).

3 Edwards (1988).

appears at the same point in the line (i.e. the end) and occurs three times in Homer (II.325; VII.91; ix.20). κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται is thus "functionally redundant," which is to say it fails a second basic test for qualifying as a traditional formula, in that it does not represent a single (economical) way of expressing a given idea in a given metrical context. It might still be the case that this is a traditional formula which is being gradually eliminated from the epic diction by an innovation expressing the same idea. Beyond the alleged parallels in the *Rig-Veda* (where the adjective *akṣitam* is attributive rather than predicative as here), however, there is no positive reason for believing this to be the case, particularly since κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται is at least as well explained as constructed on analogy with 1) κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται, 2) ἄφθιτον αἰεί (II.46, 186; XIII.22; XIV.238) and 3) κλέος εἶναι/ἐστίν/εἴη (X.212; XXII.514; iv.584; ix.264). Naturally there can be no certainty in matters of this sort. All the same, there seems to be no pressing and obvious reason to take κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται (to say nothing of κλέος ἄφθιτον alone) as an ancient poetic formula dating back to Indo-European times.

Edwards responds to Finkelberg's case by arguing that her understanding of Homeric composition is inadequate and out of date. While Parry believed that virtually all epic diction would eventually yield to analysis along the lines of simplicity and extension, Edwards points out, Hainsworth has shown that the situation is more complicated than that. Phrases used with considerable frequency, such as many noun-epithet combinations, did indeed develop highly economical formular systems. In the case of words used less often, however, "there is no reason to expect a rigorous avoidance of metrical equivalents," and as a result "the criterion of 'functional redundancy' adduced by Finkelberg is invalid, and the metrical equivalence of the two phrases [viz. κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται and κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται] proves nothing about their relative or absolute age."[4] In fact, Finkelberg does not use this criterion to make a positive claim about the age of either formula, but only points out that the appearance of κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται in the Homeric corpus eliminates one further possible ground for identifying the unique phrase κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται as traditional.[5]

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[4] Edwards (1988) 27.

[5] Finkelberg (1986) 3–5. Indeed, Finkelberg notes expressly that some unique phrases may have "belonged to the most ancient layers in the formulaic stock of Greek epic diction" and considers in detail the possibility that this might be true in the present case.

Much more important, Edwards goes on to argue that the traditional character of Homeric poetry did not consist in the transmission of individual, memorized phrases from one poet to the next, an idea he calls "anathema to oral theory," but in a "nexus of rhythmic, phonic, and thematic associations" which led different singers over and over again to the same expressions in the same poetic circumstances.[6] While κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται may not be a formula, therefore, it is formulaic in this sense and Finkelberg's objections to Nagy's thesis can safely be set aside.

Unfortunately, Edwards' arguments obscure both the nature of Nagy's original claims about the allegedly traditional phrase κλέος ἄφθιτον and the significance of Finkelberg's objections to them. In particular, Nagy does not argue that κλέος ἄφθιτον is merely "formulaic." Instead, he speaks of these words over and over again as a formula in precisely the way Finkelberg uses the term, as "an inherited expression of the remotest antiquity" and "the remnant of an Indo-European poetic phrase" which can be "retrojected to a period so remote that it antedates the very existence of Glyconics, which I have argued to be a distinctly Hellenic development."[7] Indeed, Nagy's entire thesis depends on the claim that ἄφθιτον was an epithet of κλέος "since Indo-European times" and that the two were passed down together in Greek and Vedic poetry "frozen within the meters," and he appeals repeatedly to Parry and his understanding of the nature of traditional poetic language in this connection.[8] What Finkelberg has shown is that in their unique appearance in the *Iliad* these words are not a noun-epithet combination at all, and that alone does fatal damage to Nagy's argument. Memorized phrases of many sorts were certainly passed on from one generation of Homeric singers to the next and we cannot know with certainty whether a phrase such as κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται or even κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται was an

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[6] Edwards (1988) 29.

[7] Nagy (1974) 109, 18, 142.

[8] Nagy (1974) 109 [italicized for emphasis; cf. 22–3], 156. For appeals to Parry (1928), see Nagy (1974) 8–9, 229–30. Edwards himself, although he now rejects out of hand the idea that κλέος ἄφθιτον was "handed down over the ages, like a mummified cadaver, fixed in memory" ([1988] 29), identifies the words as "a derivative of an equivalent phrase from an Indo-European heroic poetry," "a linguistic tradition predating the Greek language itself" and "a traditional usage of remarkable antiquity" in his previous work on the subject ([1985] 77–8, with citations of Nagy [1974]; [1979] *passim*).

invention of our singer or of someone who preceded him.[9] As Finkelberg has shown once again, however, there is no positive reason to believe that the latter phrase in particular was part of the *Iliad*-poet's inherited vocabulary. Edwards' ultimate conclusion is that "oral theory simply has little to add to the debate" about the alleged Indo-European pedigree of κλέος ἄφθιτον.[10] What his arguments fail to make clear is that no evidence of any other sort has ever been put forward in favor of the thesis, beyond some vague alleged parallels in the *Rig-Veda*, which in and of themselves prove nothing.[11] One can still accept Nagy's thesis as a simple and convenient article of faith, as Edwards himself appears inclined to do.[12] Beyond that, however, there is no reason to believe it is right and many reasons for thinking it is wrong. Homer may have inherited many traditions and ideas from his distant professional ancestors, but for all that one can tell, the phrase κλέος ἄφθιτον was not among them.

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[9] That these phrases and indeed the word κλέος itself do not occur with great frequency in the Homeric songs we have (i.e. from a synchronic perspective), of course, proves nothing about how important they were (and thus how economically their formular systems were organized) in the tradition Homer inherited (i.e. from a diachronic perspective).

[10] Edwards (1988) 30.

[11] It should be stressed in this connection that the Vedic phrase on which Nagy founds his thesis is a hypothetical form reconstructed on the basis of *Rig-Veda* 1.40.4; 8.103.5; 9.66.7, and 1.9.7bc (where the two words appear in different lines), so that the argument is speculative from the very first. Nagy's interpretation of the Vedic evidence has been vigorously disputed by Floyd (1980), with a response by Nagy (1981).

[12] Cf. Edwards (1988) 30 n. 21: "That κλέος ἄφθιτον does represent a survival from a pre-Greek Indo-European heroic poetry seems to me likely to be the case, but I leave it to experts in this area to argue the point." Already here, however, in his use of the term "survival" and his reference to κλέος ἄφθιτον rather than κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται, Edwards seems to lapse back into the naive Parryite (i.e. Nagyian) formulation of the question which he rejects emphatically one page earlier.

APPENDIX B

BOOK-DIVISIONS IN THE *ODYSSEY*

As serious students of the Homeric poems have long been aware, the division of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into twenty-four Books is a late scholarly convention, whose arbitrary character is apparent in the fact that it merely reflects the number of letters in the reformed Ionian alphabet.[1] As Taplin has argued recently, the Book-divisions in the *Iliad* occasionally reflect the larger structure and rhythms of Homer's story, but are often awkward and ill-placed instead.[2] The same is true of the *Odyssey*, where the ancient Divider's strategies and concerns have very little to do with those of the singer himself, but continue to influence even the most sophisticated readers and critics.[3] One basic, underlying assumption of this book has been that Homer's story of Odysseus' return is fundamentally and originally oral and that it must therefore be understood as a largely seamless, richly interconnected thing. The traditional Book-divisions, on the

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[1] For the papyrological and historical evidence, see West (1967) 18–25; cf. Pfeiffer (1968) 115–6. Richardson (1993) 20–1, offers a number of 5th and 4th century titles for sections of both poems; Ael. *VH* 13.14 gives others of uncertain date. The one coherent ancient comment on the origin of the Book-divisions is [Plu.] *Vita Hom.* 2.4: οὐχ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ ποιητοῦ, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῶν γραμματικῶν περὶ 'Αρίσταρχον ('not by the poet himself, but by the grammarians associated with Aristarchos'). The most vigorous recent statement of the thesis that Homer himself is responsible for the Book-divisions, which are thus significant markers in the text, is Goold (1977) 26–30; cf. Notopoulos (1964) 9–12. Goold examines only a few individual Books and Book-divisions, however, and even the specific examples he cites frequently do not support his case. Thus Book iv is not identical with Telemachos' stay at Sparta (note iv.625–847); ix.1–105 are essentially unconnected with the Kyklopeia; and xviii fails to include a number of incidents connected with the 'Taunting of Odysseus' (esp. xvii.369–487; xix.60–95). As for the tendency of some Books to close with nightfall or sleep, or to begin with dawn or the actions of a sleepless character (Goold 27–8), these are easy and obvious points at which to insert text-breaks, but this does not mean these breaks originated with the poet.

[2] Taplin (1992) 285–93. Taplin initially asserts that "on the whole the book-divisions are well-placed" and suggests they "seem to be the work of someone who has given thoughtful attention to the poem" (286). In his detailed analysis (287–93), however, he shows repeatedly that this is an overly generous assessment of the Divider's literary sensitivity.

[3] E.g. Thalmann (1984) 51–4. On the insidious power of the traditional Book-divisions to shape modern scholarship, cf. Taplin (1992) 285–7.

other hand, are among the most obviously 'literary' features of the text as we have it, and my primary goal in this Appendix will be to put the lie once and for all to the notion that these are sensitive and useful guides to the meaning and structure of the *Odyssey*. This is not to say that the Book-divisions are without meaning or purpose in and of themselves, however, and I will accordingly also attempt to use them to add a brief chapter to the history of the reception of the Homeric epics in antiquity.[4]

SECTION 1: *The Traditional Book-Divisions in the Odyssey*

i.444–ii.1: Given that the *Odyssey* as a whole consists of 12,110 lines of poetry, twenty-four arbitrary Books ought to average about 505 lines in length.[5] The poem's first day ends at what is now i.443–4 (cf. i.422–3), as Telemachos lies awake in bed thinking about his upcoming journey abroad, and the Divider, whoever he may be, accordingly uses the dawn which follows (ii.1) to begin his second Book.[6] This seems a natural strategy and is one to which resort is made repeatedly elsewhere in the text (esp. vii.344–viii.1; xvi.480–xvii.1).[7] All the same, the poem itself does not pause to stress its own internal chronology in any such overt way, but instead moves on smoothly from one day to the next. If it was necessary to place a Book-division somewhere in this vicinity, therefore, it might have been at least as effective to have ended Book i at what is now i.424 (cf. xviii.428), in which case Book ii would begin with a more substantial emphasis on the deliberate nature of Telemachos' behavior the next day.

ii.434–iii.1: Here again the Divider takes advantage of the fact that events on a single day within the poem occupy slightly more than 400 lines of text, and begins his third Book with the rising of the sun at iii.1–3 (cf. ii.1) and the shift of location to Pylos (iii.4–5). This division is somewhat more awkward than the one which

[4] On this topic, see most recently the essays collected in Lamberton and Keaney (1992).

[5] I assume our text of the *Odyssey* is more or less the same as the one read by the Divider; whether a few lines have been added or lost here and there since his time (cf. Apthorp [1980a]) is of no significance for my argument.

[6] I generalize in the masculine here, without meaning to imply anything in particular about the actual gender of the Divider.

[7] Cf. Goold (1977) 27–8.

precedes it, however, not only because dawn (as opposed to full day) actually arrives in the final line of Book ii (ἠῶ), but also because μέν (ii.434) is thus separated from the δέ with which it is coordinated (iii.1). Book iii might therefore better have begun one verse earlier, at what is now ii.434.[8]

iii.497–iv.1: The fourth day of Telemachos' story ends at iii.403 and the next verse consists of the same dawn-formula with which Book ii begins (ἦμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς). As Telemachos spends a bit longer with Nestor, but not long enough to make a separate Book (iii.404–85), the Divider has not altogether unreasonably opted to keep the two days together. The real problem here is that Book iii ends at an awkward point, in that the chariot-ride which brings Telemachos to Sparta (iii.491–7) is severed from his arrival there (iv.1–2). Perhaps the Divider is already concerned about the length of his projected Book iv (= 847 lines) and eager to shorten it in any way possible. All the same, this is a poor excuse for clumsiness of this sort, and if Book iii had to end somewhere in this general area, it should probably have been at what is now iii.490. Alternatively, a different overall solution to the problem might have been imposed (see below).

iv.847–v.1: Book iv is the longest in the *Odyssey* by 241 lines and close to twice the length of the three Books which precede it (444, 434, and 497 lines, respectively). It is thus obviously a special case of some sort, and much of the logic which created it can still be recovered from the text. Although Telemachos' adventures in Sparta come to a firm preliminary end at iv.624, first of all, iv.847–v.1 marks a very strong break in the narrative-line, with a movement first to Olympos and then to the story of Odysseus, and a Book-division there would seem all but mandatory for anyone carrying out a project of this sort.[9] Unfortunately, this leaves 223 verses which describe further action on Ithaca (iv.625–847) stranded between these two transition points, and this was apparently not enough text to form an independent unit in the Divider's judgment.[10] Had he wished, he could have

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[8] That the Book would then have begun with an unidentified ἠ is not necessarily an impediment to this argument; cf. the Divider's willingness to begin Book iv with οἱ.

[9] Cf. Taplin (1992) 27 n. 26, who regards this break as marking an "interval" (i.e. a point at which the poet habitually took a rest in the middle of an extended performance).

[10] The shortest Book in the *Odyssey* is Book vi, with 331 lines, almost 50% more than those contained in iv.625–847.

dealt with all these difficulties by converting iii.404–iv.847 (or even iii.491–iv.487) into two short Books. The first of these would have begun with the dawn of Telemachos' second day in Pylos (or the beginning of the final leg of his journey to Sparta) and closed with the end of his dinner with Helen and Menelaos (iv.305); the second would have opened with another dawn (iv.306) and included all events on that day, including those on Ithaca, although it would have centered on Menelaos' story of his wanderings (iv.351–586). Although this arrangement is in many ways rational and appealing, it requires that Telemachos' time in both Pylos and Sparta be distributed over several different Books, and rather than allowing that to happen the Divider opted instead to create a single, extraordinarily long Book iv.[11]

v.493–vi.1: The story of Odysseus' escape from Ogygia breaks off abruptly in the middle of vi.2, as the hero falls asleep on the Scherian shore and Homer turns his attention first to the Phaeacians in general (vi.2–14) and then to Nausikaa in particular (vi.15–109). The Divider's decision to end his fifth Book at v.493 thus makes reasonably good sense, especially since this lends additional emphasis to the poet's description of a new and very important set of characters (cf. iv.1–2; xiv.3–28). It would also have been possible, however, to extend Book v through what is now vi.47, which would have stressed the parallel nature of Athena's visits to Odysseus (v.491–vi.2) and Nausikaa (vi.2–47), while allowing the next Book to begin with a new dawn (vi.48) and contain the events of a single day (cf. i; ii).[12]

vi.331–vii.1: Books vi and vii are the two shortest in the *Odyssey* (331 and 347 lines, respectively) and the division between them among the least compelling in the poem. The Divider's arrangement lends added emphasis to Odysseus' prayer and Athena's initial response to it (vi.323–31), and effectively separates events outside the city from those within it. The price paid for this bit of editorial interpretation, however, is that Book vii now begins with the not particularly intriguing tail-end of Nausikaa's story (vii.2–13) rather than with Odysseus' movement toward the Phaeacian town and the palace (vii.14), while Athena's active intervention on her favorite's behalf

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[11] Cf. Beye (1993) 146.

[12] West (1967) 19, suggests Books v and vi might better have been combined into one, although this would create a monster almost as long as the Divider's Book iv.

(vii.14–77) is cut off from his request for it (vi.323–7). In fact, there is no good place for a Book-division here, but if one had to be introduced, it might better have been at vii.13–4.

vii.347–viii.1: The division between Books vii and viii merely reflects the fact that everyone in the story goes to bed at that point (vii.335–47; cf. i.423–44; xiv.520–33; xvi.480–1) and a new dawn follows (viii.1; cf. ii.1; xvii.1). If a Book-division had to be placed somewhere in this general vicinity, therefore, this is a relatively inoffensive spot, although the choice once again lays inordinate emphasis on the transition from night to day within the poem. Had the Divider made different decisions earlier, he could have devoted one Book of moderate length to Odysseus' largely hospitable initial reception among the Phaeacians (e.g. vi.48–vii.229, = 513 lines) and followed this with a second, in which the hero is tested and examined more closely (e.g. vii.230–viii.469, = 587 lines).[13]

viii.586–ix.1: As the very similar character of the break between xii.453 and xiii.1 makes clear, the Divider was apparently determined to treat Odysseus' account of his Wanderings (ix.1–xii.453) as an independent textual unit. This makes a certain amount of sense, given that most of the approximately 2200 lines in what are now Books ix–xii form an inset tale of a series of adventures set many years in the past. At the same time, however, this division actively misrepresents the real character of the narrative, since Book viii ends abruptly in the middle of a conversation and indeed between a request (viii.572–86) and the response to it. Even worse, Odysseus' stories are now separated from Demodokos' song about the fall of Troy (viii.499–520), which he himself requested (viii.492–5) and which serves as an essential introduction to his tale of his Wanderings (esp. ix.37–9).[14] A more effective place for a Book-division in this general area might therefore have been after viii.457–69, where Odysseus says goodbye to Nausikaa and sits down beside her father at the banquet where he will finally reveal his identity. Alternatively, the new Book might

[13] For the basic narrative structure of this hypothetical second Book (i.e. an initial evening encounter with the king and queen in their palace, followed by sleep and a new dawn, and further discussion and feasting on the second day), cf. the Divider's Book iv. This arrangement would require separating μέν and αὐτάρ at vii.229–30, but the Divider himself does this at xiii.439–xiv.1.

[14] Cf. Chapter 2. The connection between Demodokos' song and the apology seem not to have been lost on all ancient readers, for Arist. *Po.* 1455a2–4 includes Odysseus' tears at viii.521–2 in what he calls 'the apology to Alkinoos' (Ἀλκίνοου ἀπολόγῳ); cf. Richardson (1993) 20.

have begun at what is now ix.39, where Odysseus' account of his adventures (as opposed to his self-introduction and his protestations about his eagerness to return to Ithaca) actually begins.

ix.566–x.1: This division marks the departure from Goat Island and the end of Odysseus' adventure among the Kyklopes, but is of no more substantial significance.[15] Had the Divider wished, he could just as well have placed the beginning of his next Book at what is now x.133 or x.135 instead, with the conclusion of the even more terrible disaster at Telepyle, thus reserving Book x for Kirke. Given that Book ix is already over 500 lines long at this point, however, his decision seems a reasonable one.

x.574–xi.1; xi.640–xii.1: There are no neat and obvious lines within Odysseus' narrative to divide his adventures with Kirke from his visit to the Underworld. The Divider, on the other hand, is apparently concerned to keep the encounter with the Dead contained within a single Book, and accordingly begins Book xi at the precise moment at which the hero and his men depart from Aiaia and ends it with the last complete syntactic unit before their return there. One unfortunate result of this is that the companions' request to return home (x.471–5) is severed from the journey which results from it. Had the overall structure of the narrative been taken into greater account, Book xi might have begun with what is now x.469 and ended at xii.7 with the final night spent on Aiaia; Book xii would then begin with dawn (xii.8). This would yield a Book of 753 lines, which is long but not extraordinarily so (cf. iv).

xii.453–xiii.1: Here once again (cf. viii.586–ix.1) the Divider's determination to treat the Wanderings as a separate textual unit causes him to sever Odysseus' speech from its larger narrative context (esp. xiii.1–16). A Book-division at either xiii.17–8 (with the break-up of the feast, followed at the beginning of the next Book by the arrival of a new day and the final preparations for the hero's departure) or, even better, at xiii.92–3 (with the poet's closing summary discussion of Odysseus and his past [xiii.89–92], followed by the arrival on Ithaca at the same time as the appearance of the dawn-star [xiii.93–5]) would have been much more effective in preserving the larger rhythms of the story and thus in highlighting the significance of the return to Ithaca.[16]

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[15] ix.565–6 could nonetheless just as well have been attached to the beginning of Book x.

[16] Taplin (1992) 19, 27, 31, seems to regard xiii.92–3 as the most important

xiii.440–xiv.1: The narrative in the first half of the *Odyssey* is somewhat choppy, in that it focusses first on Telemachos (i–iv), then on Odysseus (v–viii), and finally veers off for several thousand lines into the story of the Wanderings (ix–xii). In addition, there are frequent changes of place, such as from Ithaca to Pylos to Sparta in Books ii–iv, and as a result individual Books are relatively easy to create. The second half of the poem is more unified and thus less amenable to such treatment. Book xiii in particular is an awkward hodge-podge of essentially independent narrative segments (i.e. xiii.1–17 [the end of the feast], 18–125 [the next day's feast and departure from Phaeacia], 125–87 [the wrath of Poseidon], and 187–439 [the encounter of Odysseus and Athena]) and owes its existence solely to the fact that the Divider was intent on ending one Book with the conclusion of Odysseus' story of his Wanderings (xii.450–3) and beginning another with the transition to his initial encounter with Eumaios (xiv.1–3). That the division here has nothing to do with Homer's own purposes is apparent from the fact that Book xiii ends with a μέν-clause (xiii.439; cf. ii.434), while Book xiv begins with the αὐτάρ which corresponds to it (xiv.1).

xiv.533–xv.1: At the end of Book xiii both Athena and the poet make it clear that her journey to Sparta (μέν) is to balance Odysseus' visit to Eumaios (αὐτάρ) (xiii.439–40; cf. xiii.403–13), and there is accordingly no strong break in the narrative-line when she appears to Telemachos here (xv.1–5). This Book-division might therefore better have been placed at xv.55–6 with the arrival of dawn in Sparta, which would have stressed the increasing interconnection between the two strands of Homer's story.[17] By ending Book xiv here as everyone in the hut goes to bed (xiv.520–33), however, the Divider manages to create a wholly artificial textual unit, 'Odysseus' First Day with Eumaios.'

xv.557–xvi.1: Book xv is an awkward and ungainly creature, much like Book xiii before it and for very similar reasons. This division and the one which follow combine to convert Odysseus' reunion with his son into an independent entity, much like his first day in the hut (Book xiv), and Book xv is thus defined in an essentially negative way, in that it consists of everything which the Divider preferred not to have in either xiv or xvi. The point at which the Book begins

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narrative-break in the poem and perhaps the point at which Homer divided two hypothetical consecutive days of performance.

[17] For the possibility of a Book beginning ὣς ἔφατ', cf. xiii.1.

is nonetheless somewhat unfortunate, since it reduces Telemachos' revealing discussion with Theoklymenos and Peiraios (xv.508–49), which effectively sets the stage for his reunion with his father and their joint revenge, to the status of an appendix to his journey. Even given the Divider's obvious editorial concerns, therefore, Book xvi might better have begun with what is now xv.493 and thus with the dawn at xv.495, or perhaps with xv.555, which would at least eliminate the extraordinary abruptness with which Telemachos now appears outside the swineherd's hut, although this would once again (cf. ii.434–iii.1) require dividing μέν (xv.553) from δέ (xv.555).

xvi.481–xvii.1: At this point in the story, everyone in the hut goes to sleep, and what follows is another very significant dawn (cf. xvi.270–3). Although there is no strong break in the narrative here, therefore, this is a reasonable spot for a Book-division, although the stress it places on chronology is once again artificial.[18]

xvii.606–xviii.1: After xvii.182–203, where Odysseus and Eumaios set off for the city, Homer's storyline lacks any obvious strong break for many hundreds of lines, and this in turn poses a serious problem for the Divider. His decision to end Book xvii here, with the poet's announcement that evening had come and the departure of one character from the hall (xvii.589–606), followed by the arrival of another (xviii.1–7), therefore, seems as good a choice as any, given the constraints upon him. One major disadvantage of this arrangement is that inordinate emphasis is placed upon the person of Iros, whereas the real focus of the action is Antinoos' unrelenting hostility toward the Stranger (esp. xvii.374–504, 566–8; xviii.34–50).

xviii.428–xix.1: There is once again no substantial break in the narrative here, although another set of characters departs from the hall (cf. xvii.604–5). This division does stress the connection between the puzzle posed by the treatment of the arms at xix.1–52 and Penelope's decision to set the contest of the bow (xix.576–81) by including them within the same Book, although an awareness of that connection at this point in the text probably reflects an essentially literary point of view. Book xix might therefore just as well have begun at what is now xix.51 (or xix.53), after the departure of Telemachos for bed.

xix.604–xx.1: Although Penelope leaves the hall and falls asleep at this point, the night is not yet over and she awakes again later

[18] Cf. Taplin (1992) 27 n. 26.

(xx.57–90). This is thus an awkward point for a Book-division, but there are no obviously better alternatives available, given that the story continues to move forward in a gradual and highly integrated manner. Nor is it possible to delay the beginning of Book xx until what is now xx.91 or xx.122, since it then becomes impossible to convert the rest of the poem into five even moderately satisfactory units.[19] Although it is difficult to say anything positive about the division here, therefore, the Divider has done the best he could in a bad situation.

xx.394–xxi.1: Book xxi now stands alone as 'The Contest of the Bow,' and thus resembles Books xi ('The Trip to the Underworld'), xiv ('Odysseus' Encounter with Eumaios') and xvi ('The Reunion of Telemachos and Odysseus'). The poet's summary of the action and his prediction of what is to come at xx.390–4 do create the sense of a slight, extremely pregnant pause here (cf. xiii.89–92), while the break reduces the impact of what might otherwise seem to be a clumsy virtual repetition of xx.388 (κούρη Ἰκαρίοιο, περίφρων Πηνελόπεια) just eight verses later (κούρῃ Ἰκαρίοιο, περίφρονι Πηνελοπείᾳ xxi.2). Although this is a largely arbitrary Book-division, therefore, it is not without some positive effect, at least for a literate audience trained to prize verbal variation rather than its opposite. All the same, Homer's reference to Penelope listening in on events in the hall already at xx.387–9 makes it clear he did not conceive of her action in fetching the bow as occurring quite as abruptly as it now appears to (xxi.1–4).

xxi.434–xxii.1: This is a completely artificial division, which serves to separate the contest of the bow (Book xxi) from the beginning of Odysseus' revenge. The story itself continues without the slightest interruption or pause.

xxii.501–xxiii.1: As Odysseus' revenge is complete at xxii.479, the Divider could have begun his next Book at xxii.480 with the hero's call first for fire and brimstone to cleanse his halls and then for his wife and faithful serving-women (xxii.481–4). He did not do so, however, and chose in addition to break the action off at an extremely odd point, after only two-thirds of these orders have been carried out (xxii.492–501). Presumably his intention to give Book xxiii

[19] This is especially true given that Book xix is already over 600 lines long at this point. Taplin (1992) 27 n. 26, suggests that xx.90–1 might be a plausible "interval" division (i.e. a point at which the original singer often paused), but ὣς ἔφατ' seems an awkward way to resume after a break.

over completely to Penelope and her reunion with Odysseus (see below on xxiii.372–xxiv.1) explains both decisions.

xxiii.372–xxiv.1: xxiv.1 marks a sharp break in the action, as Hermes leads the souls of the Suitors down to Hades, and is therefore not an unreasonable point at which to place a Book-division. All the same, xxiii.344–72 (dawn of the final day of the poem, accompanied by Odysseus' warning to Penelope and his escape with his allies to the countryside) belongs much more with what follows (xxiv.205–548) than with what precedes it. Given the way in which Book xxiii begins, it seems a reasonable assumption that the Divider was concerned to keep Odysseus' final conversation with Penelope (xxiii.349–65) in the same Book as their reunion. Were this not a concern, Book xxiv might just as well have begun with what is now xxiii.344, i.e. with the arrival of a new day and a new initiative of Athena (cf. v.1–20; vi.2–3; xv.1–3; xx.1–4).

Section 2: *The Divider and his Purposes*

The Divider is clearly acting in a very deliberate fashion, albeit on the basis of interests, concerns and blind-spots rather different from our own. At best, his Book-divisions reflect real transitions within the narrative (esp. iv.847–v.1), although even these sometimes lead to difficulties of other sorts (e.g. with the assignment of iv.625–847). All too frequently, however, his divisions lend inappropriate emphasis to words or events which fall at the beginning or the end of one of his Books, or separate things which ought to go together. Whoever he is, therefore, he is certainly not Homer. The number twenty-four is clearly an arbitrary (i.e. 'round') one, as the fact that it is also used to organize the considerably longer *Iliad* makes clear. Beyond that, however, the Divider's decisions are not obviously driven by purely mechanical considerations, and the fact that his Books range in length from 331 to 847 verses (vi and iv, respectively) makes it particularly clear that he is not much constrained by the standard size of a papyrus-roll, except perhaps as setting an upper limit on the length of any individual Book.[20] Nor does his repeated willingness to end a Book with μέν (ii.434; xiii.439; cf. xiv.523) suggest the mindset of an

[20] *Pace* Goold (1960) 288–9. The Books of the *Iliad* also vary widely in length, from 424 lines in Book XIX to 909 lines in Book V.

academic grammarian like Aristarchos, although arguments of this sort cannot carry great conviction, given how little we know of the real character of Alexandrian scholarship. What is quite clear, on the other hand, is that the Divider frequently seems concerned to create Books (esp. i; iii; xi; xiv; xvi; xxi; xxiii) or units of Books (ix–xii) which will appear to stand on their own, regardless of the violence this does to the larger fabric of the story. As West has already suggested in more general terms, therefore, it would seem a reasonable hypothesis that he is involved in some very practical way in the commercial book-trade, and his divisions may thus correspond roughly to orders received (or expected) on a regular basis from his customers, and so may represent something more than his own personal literary and aesthetic prejudices. The abrupt manner in which Book ix begins and Book xii ends, for example, makes little sense in terms of the actual structure of Homer's tale, but does seem logical if one posits that buyers of books in the late classical or early Hellenistic period were eager to read (i.e. willing to pay for) Odysseus' apology in its entirety, but considerably less interested in the speeches by Alkinoos which accompany and frame it. So too within the Wanderings the journey to the Underworld has been accorded its own, somewhat arbitrary Book, suggesting it was a particular favorite of contemporary readers, and the same is true of the reunions of Odysseus with Eumaios and Telemachos, which the Divider has isolated in the nominally independent Books xiv and xvi. Stray bits and pieces of text which remained after this initial sorting-out had been completed could then be converted into individual Books of their own (e.g. xiii or xv) or, if too short for such treatment, appended wherever seemed convenient or appropriate (e.g. iv.625–847, added to 'Telemachos in Sparta').

What we have in the traditional Book-divisions is thus a chapter in the history of the interpretation of the Homeric poems, and a singularly important chapter at that. The *Odyssey* itself is a single old, richly interconnected oral story, with very few obvious superficial fault-lines. The traditional Book-divisions, on the other hand, are a trace of the process by which that poem was appropriated and refigured by a younger and much more aggressively literate culture into a series of apparently self-contained narrative units, which could almost by definition be legitimately read in isolation from one another.[21] The

[21] How and when rates of literacy (whatever that might mean) changed in the

aesthetic sense those divisions reflect seems fascinated by relatively short, seemingly self-sufficient scenes and by encounters between two or three finely-drawn individual characters, and the connection with some styles of Hellenistic art and poetry is obvious. Needless to say, the tradition of reading the *Odyssey* of which these divisions are a symptom is one which continues today and in which we are all profoundly implicated. All the same, that tradition represents a perspective on the text against which we must keep constantly on guard if we are to make sense of Homer's old and very oral song.

Greek world is a much-vexed and much-debated question; for the Hellenistic period, see Harris (1989) 116–46, esp. 125–6.

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